

THE
RETURN
OF
PRAYERS.
A Treatise,

Wherein this Case [*How to discern
Gods Answers to our Prayers*]
is briefly resolved:

*With other Observations upon Psalm 85. 8.
Concerning Gods speaking Peace, &c.*

By THO. GOODWIN B. D.

Hab. 2. 1. *I will watch to see what he will say
to me.*

LONDON,

Printed by R. H. for R. Dawlman, and are to
be sold by W. Gilbertson at the
Bible in Giltspur Street, 1659.

Sarah Pratt
her Book 1732

John Meger
his Booke
August
1666
~

: 174 n

- del h

[illegible]

THE
RETURN
OF
PRAYERS.

A Treatise,

Wherein this Case [*How to discern
Gods Answers to our Prayers*]
is briefly resolved :

*With other Observations upon Psalm 85. 8.
Concerning Gods speaking Peace, &c.*

By THO. GOODWIN B. D.

Hab. 2. 1. *I will watch to see what he will say
to me.*

LONDON,

Printed by R. H. for R. Dawlman, and are to
be sold by W. Gilbertson at the
Bible in Giltspur Street, 1659.

X 1606/892





TO THE
Much Honoured
KNIGHT,
Sir NATHANIEL RICH.

SIR!



God, who from all
eternity hath had
an infinite Mass
of grace and glory
lying by him, to
bestow upon his
Church; and did accordingly pro-
vide a treasury and Magazin suffi-
cient wherein to store up all, [the Ephes. 3. 8
Bosome of his son] in whom are
hid, riches so unearchable as
cannot be told over, much lesse

The Epistle

spent to all eternity.

Παυλος.

Tit. 3. 6.

He hath as richly shed his holy Spirit on us ; that we, who could never have known of any thing bequeathed us, nor what to pray for as we ought, might both fully from him know all that God hath given us, and through him lay claim thereto, who maketh intercession for us ; and so doth furnish us with a privy key to all that Treasury, which otherwise, is fast shut up to all the world.

Through which Spirit of Prayer and Supplications thus poured forth, believers come to be at once anointed to the fellowship, and execution of those three glorious Offices of Christ their Head. Not onely^r of Priests, by offering up their prayers, as spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ : but^r of Kings, to rule with God, Hos. 11. 12. Being hereby made of Privy Counsell

Dedicatory.

to the King of Kings, so as their ^{Pl. 20. 4. 5.}
Countells and desires exprest in
their petitions, are said to be ful-
filled, and their decrees in their ^{Job. 22.}
Prayers made, ratified, and esta- ^{27. 28.}
blisht. Nay further, by vertue of
this priviledge, advanced to such
height of favour, as by their
strength in prayer alone, to have
power with God himself, and not
onely with him, but also over him,
and in their wrestlings to pre-
vall, Yea to command: Himself hath
said it, Thus saith the Lord, the
holy One of Israel and his ma-
ker, ASKE of me, of things to
come, concerning my sonnes,
and concerning the work of my
hands, COMMAND YE ME, *Isai.*
45. 11. which so transcendent pri-
viledge of power, is likewise by the
expresse words of this great Char-
ter, universally extended unto all
transactions of this lower part of
his dominions; whether Ecclesia-

The Epistle

sticall, which doe concern his
sonnes, that is, his Church : or
what ever other, the more ordinary
works of his hands, that apper-
tain to common providence.

And for as much as these grand
affairs of this his Kingdome, as
future, and to come, are commend-
ed to their prayers, as their most
proper subjects, about which they
are to treat, Ask of me of things
to come : In this respect, they doe
become as truly Prophets also ;
though not in so full and complete,
yet in some kinde of true resem-
blance ; not by foretelling, yet by
forespeaking in their prayers,
things that come to passe. To de-
monstrate which, God, who made
and upholds this world, and all
things in it, by the word of his pow-
er, doth likewise rule and govern it,
by the Presidents and prescript rules
of the word of his will : exactly di-
spensing unto men, both rewards and
punish-

Dedicatory.

punishments, according to the tenor of some or other of his promises and threatnings, and former like proceedings therein recorded: though with such various liberty, in respect of the particulars, that his wayes remain unsearchable and past finding out: That look how he appointed in the heavens, those Ordinances of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, by their light, heat, and motion, to rule the day and night, to divide and cause the several seasons of the year, and all the changes and alterations that doe passe over this animal and natural world. In like manner hath he stretched out that so exceeding broad expanse of his word and law, (to which the Psalmist doth assimilate it) over this rational world of Angels and Men; and therein set his Statutes and his Judgements, that by the light of Precepts, and their influences in rewards and punishments, they might

Ps. 19. 1. 96

Ps. 19. 1, 2,

3, 4. com-

pared with

Rom. 12. 18.

The Epistle

order and direct these his creatures reasonable, and all their actions; also dispose, and set out all the issues of them. And seeing his Saints they are a people in whose hearts is his Law; and their delight is to meditate therein both day and night, they daily calculating and observing the various aspects, conjunctions, and mixt influences of those innumerable precepts, promises and threatnings, which themselves and others, Nations or men, stand under: and by a Judgment thence resulting, so farre as they have attained; endeavouring to frame their supplications and petitions according to Gods will: Hence their prayers oft, full happily succeed, and aforehand doe accord to those issues and events, that afterwards fall out. That like as it sometimes falls out, that the Earth comes to be just under the Sunne and Moon in some of their conjunctions;

so

Dedictory.

so their desires and prayers, sometimes in a direct line, fall under and subordinately concur with Gods secret purposes, and some revealed promise met in conjunction, to produce such and such effects. The Spirit also, herein helping their infirmities, sometimes so guiding and directing them by a gracious preinstinct, though unknown to them, to pitch their requests upon such particulars as God hath fully purposed to bring to passe; becoming thereby, as it were, the spirit of prophecy unto them, respectively, in some measure and degree.

Thus doth that great King employ his neereſt ſervants, as his under-Officers and Sheriffs, to ſerve his Writs and Executions upon his enemies, to execute the Judgment written in his threatnings, Psal. 149. 9. and to accompliſh his mercies written alſo; by putting all the promiſes in ſuit; to be as man-
midwives

The Epistle

Esay 37.

2, 3, 4.

Zeph. 1, 2.

midwives (as Hezekiahs allusion, when he sent a visiting to the Prophet Esay, for his voyce and suffrage, seemeth to import) to help and asst his promises and decrees in their travel with mercies and deliverance, when these their children doe come unto the birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth.

In all which, they shall therefore have the honour to be accounted Co-workers together with God, in his greatest works of wonder. And at the latter day, when that great and last Edition, both of all Gods works, and likewise ours, then complete and finished, shall be published to all the world, they shal finde thir names put to them, together with his own; & the same by him acknowledged, to be as truly the works of their hearts and prayers as that they are the sole work of his hands and power, Such honour have all his Saints.

And

Dedictory.

*And if all the works of G O D
are so exceeding great, and his
thoughts therein so very deep,
Psal 92.5. that every Iota of them,
doth deserve our deepest studies and
intentions; and therunto require
a proper skil and wiidome, to read
his hand peculiar unto the Saints,
v 6. whereunto there must be ad-
joyned the most diligent search and
attentive observation to finde out* Pc. 77 9.
*his meaning in them; and withall a
special inclination and delight to
be conversant therein, Thy works
are very great, sought out of
those that have pleasure in them,
Psal. III. 2. And if, of all the rest,
those choicer pieces, his works of
mercy may challenge our best re-
gard: in which his heart and de-
lights are most; on which his Wis-* Mic. 7 18.
*dome hath laid the richest work-
manship, in the most curious con-
trivements of his love: Then surely
that selected volume of more special
mercies*

The Epistle

mercies [His Epistles] vouchsafed in answer to our prayers, is above all other, most exactly to be studied, and most diligently to be perused by us. Wherein God doth unbosome himself, and lay open his heart more sweetly, more familiarly unto us; which are directed and in a manner dedicated more particularly unto our selves alone; Many of them written with his own hand, in a more immediate manner discovered and appearing in them: and all of them come sealed with the impresse of everlasting love, and down laden with the enclosurè of the most precious tokens of his special favour. Who so is wise, will observe these things; and they shall understand the loving kindnesse of the Lord.

Ps 107 34

Neither have such favours, one-ly more of mercy in the things themselves bestowed, but are further endeared to us, by being made
our

Dedicatory.

our own mercies, by a more peculiar title to them : by which the kindnesse in them is rendred double. For therein we have that royall liberty to become our own choosers, and contrivers of our own condition ; having all the promises thrown down to us, with blanks for us to write our names in which of them we please ; which is the greatest liberty. And we have withall his Spirit secretly directing, and fixing the needle of our desires to the same point, wherein his great intentions towards us doe meet with our best good : which is indeed the truest liberty. And to be made our selves, whom we love so well, and therefore delight to doe good unto, the chiefeft instruments under him of our own greatest happinesse, is a priviledge, than which, the Creature is not made capable of a more transcendent royalty. And yet when the greatest love thus re-
tified,

The Epistle

etified, which possibly we can bear our selves, hath opened its mouth widest, and stretched our desires in praying to their utmost compasse, then will Gods infinite vast love, not onely fill them, but doe for us above all that we are able to ask, yea to think; exceeding abundantly above all; as far above as his thoughts are above our thoughts, which is far more than the heavens are higher than the earth.

All which, when put together (if well considered,) how would it provoke us to call in all the precious stock of our time, thoughts and intentions which we cast away on trifles, to lay out the choicest portion of them in this thriving trade of intercourse with God: the returns whereof are better than the merchandize of silver; and the gain thereof, than fine gold. It is the praying Christian that alone im-
ployes.

Dedictory.

ployes the riches of the promises, which we usually let lie by us like dead stock unimproved : whilest he like a Wile and diligent Merchant, looks abroad upon all the affairs of Jesus Christ, that are afloat here in this world, and adventures in them all ; is watchfull to spie out all advantages, and with an holy ~~very~~ ^{very} ~~procurer~~, intermedleth in every businesse that may bring in glory unto God, good unto the Church, grace and comfort to his own soule. And how infinitely rich must that man needs become, that puts even Gods riches out to use, with the increase of ten Talents for one, yea an hundred fold !

The due estimate whereof, would no lesse quicken us to as diligent an enquiry, what becomes of all those goodly adventures, the prayers we make ; to listen what haven they arrive at, how, and when, and with what fraught they doe return.

In

The Epistle

In which great duty, and most necessary property of all true Merchants, yet many of the best and greatest dealers, that are diligent enough in praying, are still found failing and deficient; that omit no gainfull oportunity of adventure, but are carelesse and unobservant of their returns.

Some through ignorance (it may be) that this is at all a duty, or of any such importance, are carefull onely how to lade in prayers enough, not expecting to finde any of this bread cast upon the waters, untill that great and generall return of themselves and all the world, with joy bringing their sheaves with them. Others, though at present, many of their prayers come home after a few dayes, and richly laden; yet through want of skill to reade those Bills of Exchange which God often writes in an obscurer Character, they

Dedicatory.

they lie unregarded by them. Many when voyages prove long, (though to their greater advantage, when once they doe return, yet in the meantime) through discouragement, they give all for lost, as we doe ships at Seawe cannot hear of. The most are commonly complaining, that their adventures still miscarry, and that little or nothing comes of all their prayers. And All are negligent of keeping their Books of Accounts, to cast up there comings in, and goings out, the one with the other. By which they loose the chiefeft portion of that comfort, which for the present, God hath here allotted us to live upon, [the revenues of their prayers:] And God also, is not onely robbed of that custome of his glory which should thence accrew; but wronged also by standing still as debtor in their accounts to many prayers, in the return of which he hath been creditor

The Epistle

creditor long agoe.

I have endeavoured therefore in this small Treatise to convince believers of the grand importance of this duty, which is so full of gain : to discover likewise the causes of the neglect herein, and remove the temptations and discouragements which do occasion it and have briefly resolved such cases as doe more usually occur in the practise of it. But principally my desire was to give in some few experiments, and observations which may help to teach the weaker sort, though not perfectly to read, yet here and there to spell, and especially out of the impressions in their own hearts Gods meaning towards them in his answers. I have cast in some scattered calculations of broken prayers cast up, which though they will not amount to make generall and perfect Tables out of, yet may serve, as instances and examples, for young beginners, to direct them

Dedicatory.

them in the exercise of this most usefull skill, and wisdom, how to compute and ballance their accounts by comparing their prayers and their returns together.

This small and imperfect embri-
on, I have presumed to send forth in-
to the world; and directed it first of
all to present its service unto you;
and make an honorable and thank-
full mention of your Name. Your
worth deserves a more costly, large,
and lasting monument for this in-
scription. Your own abilities of
learning, eloquence, and depth of
wisdom in humane affaires, would
you be perswaded to lay them out, as
you are able, would erect such a re-
membrance and sumptuous memori-
all of you, when you are gathered
to your Fathers, as would bear some
proportion to your great worth. But
that which imboldened me was the
neer affinity which meditations of
this nature doe hold, with those other
your

The Epistle &c.

your more retired thoughts you think to none but God and your own soule. You have been long a frequent and constant dealer in this blessed way of entercourse with God in private: Those that know you, know your strict observance of those exchange hours you have devoted to meet with God, and enjoy communion with Him. But above all, it was that personall obligation, under which a great and special favour from you long since brought me, upon which I devoted (with my self) the first of my labours unto your service. And it became one great relief unto my thoughts, weighing the many inconveniences of appearing thus in publique, that it gave so full occasion to pay my vows thus openly before all the world; which having now done, God that is rich in mercy to all that call upon him, fill you with all Grace, & grant all your petitions; so prayes,
Your Worships obliged
to love and serve you
Tho. Goodwin.



THE TABLE.

CHAP. I. *The main observation :
That Gods people are diligently to
observe the answers of their prayers.*

pag. 4

The sinfulness of the neglect here-
of demonstrated by seven rea-
sons.

1. Reas. An Ordinance of God
taken in vain. 5

2. Reas. Gods Attributes taken
in vain. 6

3. Reas. God in answering made
to speak in vain. 9

4. Reas. God provoked not to
answer. 12

5. Reas. We shall not return
thanks. 14

6. Reas. We shall lose much ex-
perience. 15

1. Of

The Table.

1. Of Gods faithfulness. *ibid.*
2. Of our own wayes towards him. 18
7. Reas. We shall lose much comfort. 21

Chap. 2. *Three Cases : The first concerning prayers for such promises as may be accomplisht in ages to come.*

- 1 § Such prayers the Church to come doth reap. 24
- 2 § Yet we at present may have answer about them. 29
- 3 § In Heaven, and at the last day, we shall rejoyce for their accomplishment. 30

Chap 3. *Second Case : Concerning prayers made for others of our friends, &c. How answered. ibid.*

- 1 § Such prayers oft granted. 33
- 2 § Yet not alwayes in the very things prayed for. 35
- Such promises but indefinite. 36
- As all temporal promises are. 38
- Our Faith towards them not required to be assurance. 39
- Unlesse

The Table.

Unlesse God give a special Faith.

43

3 § Such prayers returned into our own bosomes.

46

4 § God in the end casts some out of our prayers.

49

5 § Those prayers answered in some others.

51

Chap. 4. *Third Case : How the influence of our own prayers, when others pray also for the same thing with us, may be discerned.*

54

1 § If our hearts are affected with the same holy affection. *ibid.*

Unbeknown each to other.

56

2 § By some special endeavour : as,

57

1 Some notable circumstance.

ibid.

2 By joy in the accomplishment.

58

3 By thankfulnesse for the accomplishment.

60

3 § This lesse to be doubted when the thing prayed for by us doth concern our own particular.

61

The Table

Chap. 5. *Common directions helpfull in all Cases, and prayers : taken first from observations from Before and In praying.* 63

1 § BEFORE : when God prepares the heart. 64

Difference between Satans motions to prayer, and Gods. 66

2 § IN prayer : Gods *speaking*s in prayer are evidences of hearing : and discerned by four things. 69

1 Giving a quietnesse by prayer about the thing prayed for. *ibid.*

3 § 2 By revealing his love, in and upon such petitions. 73

A Caution herein. 76

Reasons why God draws nigh when he grants not the thing. 77

4 § 3 God sometimes gives a particular assurance. 79

A caution herein. 82

5 § 4 By giving a restlesse importunity to pray for a particular mercy. 86

Chap. 6.

The Table.

Chap. 6. *Observations made upon the disposition of the heart after prayer: until the ISSUE of the thing prayed for.* 88

1 § When God gives an obedient dependant heart. *ibid.*

2 § When God gives an heart waiting for, and expecting it. 90

Chap. 7. *Observations made AFTER prayer Upon the ISSUE: fi st If accomplisht: Whether as the fruit of prayer, or of common providence.* 92

1 § God sometimes answers the prayer in the very thing and manner desired. 93

2 § Directions to discern that things thus obtained are in answer to prayers. 99

1 From the manner of Gods performance. A more than ordinary hand discovered in things accomplisht by prayer, instanced in five particulars. *ibid.*

1 By bringing it to passe through difficulties. 100

2 By facilitating all means. 101

A 2

3 Effecting

The Table.

- 3 Effecting it suddenly. 103
4 With addition of other mercies
above what was desired. 104
5 By some special circumstance
as a token of his hand in it. 105
3 § 2 From the *Time*, wherein it is
accomplisht. 107
As first when we were most in-
stant in prayer. 108
2 In the fittest time for us. Then,
110
1 When we have most need.
112
2 When the heart was best
prepared to receive it. 113
4 § 3 From the proportion which
may be observed betwixt Gods
dealings in the accomplishment,
and our prayers. 116

Chap. 8. Seven observations *more*,
from the Effects, which the accom-
plishment of the mercy hath upon the
heart. 120

1 § If it draw the heart neerer to
God. *ibid.*

2 § Enlargeth the heart with thank-
fulnesse. 123

3 § And

The Table.

3 § And encourageth the heart the more to pray, for other things.

125

4 § If it makes more careful to perform the vows made to obtain it.

ibid.

5 § If by faith a man sees and acknowledgeth Gods sole hand in the accomplishment.

128

6 § By an assurance which comes sometimes with the mercy.

132

7 § *By the event*: Things obtained by prayer, prove stable mercies.

ibid.

Chap. 9. *Considerations, to quiet us, and to help to discern an acceptation of the prayer, when the thing is Not accomplished.*

135

1 § The thing not alwayes granted, when yet the prayer is heard. *ibid.*

An Objection answered.

137

2 § Some blessings not absolutely promised, nor absolutely to be prayed for.

139

In which a denial is to be interpreted as best for us in Gods judgement.

140

A 3

3 § There

The Table.

- 3 § There may be a reservation in the denial for some greater mercy. *ibid.*
- 4 § There may be a transmutation into some other blessing of the same kinde. 143
- 5 § God when he denies, yet answereth to the ground of our prayers. 144
- 6 § And yeilds far in it, to give satisfaction to his childe. 149
- 7 § We may know that the prayer notwithstanding is accepted, by the effects upon the heart, which are four. 152
- 1 If we acknowledge God righteous in the denial. *ibid.*
- 2 If God fills the heart with contentment in the denial. 153
- 3 If the heart be thankful out of Faith. 154
- 4 If not discouraged, but prayes still. 155

Chap. 10. Application : *A reproof of them that pray, but look not after the Returns of their prayers : The causes of this neglect, are* 157

1 Temptations :

The Table.

- 1 Temptations : 1 From want of assurance that our persons are accepted. 160
2 From the weaknesse of our prayers : three answers to it. 163
3 From not obtaining what we formerly prayed for, answered by four things. 168
2 More sinful discouragements, as 171
1 From slothfulnesse in praying. *ibid.*
2 Looking at prayer as a duty only, and not as a means to obtain. 174
3 Falling into sinne after payers. 177

Six Observations more out of the Text.

- 1 *Observ.* That God doth sometimes not speak peace to his own people. 184
2 *Observ.* The cause thereof some Folly. 186
3 *Observ.* God only can speak Peace. 191
4 *Observ.* God easily can give Peace

The Table.

Peace.	197
5 <i>Observ.</i> God will certainly speak to his people.	205
6 <i>Observ.</i> After peace spoken his people should return no more to Folly.	206
The Sinne and Folly of Relapsing shewn by seven reasons.	213
Temptations from Relapse into the same Sinne after Peace spo- ken, answered,	
By Scriptures.	240
By three Examples.	244
By four Reasons.	251
Five Cautions.	265

FINIS.



THE
RETURN
OF
PRAYERS.

PSAL. 85. 8.

*I will hear what God the Lord will
speak : for He will speak peace unto
His people, and to His Saints : but
let them not turn again to folly.*

The Coherence of the words.



His P s a l m was
penned, in the
name and for the
comfort of the
whole Church
of the Jews, both
as a Prophecy of, and a Prayer
for

for their return out of the Babylonish Captivity, and the flowing in again of that ancient glory, peace, administration of Justice, liberty of Gods Ordinances, plenty, and increase, which formerly they enjoyed, but had now suffered an ebbe of seventy years continuance. And first he beginneth with Prayer, from the first *Verse* to this we have in hand, putting the Lord in minde of, and urging Him with His gracious dealings in former times unto His Church : this is not the first time (saith he) that the Church hath been in Captivity, and that thou hast returned it, (as out of *Egypt, &c.*) and therefore we hope that thou wilt doe so again: *Thou hast been favourable unto thy Land, &c.* His prayer being finished, and he having spoke, he now stands, and listens, as you use to doe when you expect an *Eccho,*



Eccho, what Eccho he should have, what answer would be returned from Heaven, whether his prayer had already come, *I will hear what the Lord will speak :* or as some read it, *I hear what the Lord doth speak :* for sometimes there is a present Eccho, a speedy answer returned to a mans heart, even ere the prayer is half finished, as unto *Daniel, Dan. 9. 20, 21.* And in brief it is this, *The Lord will speak peace unto His people :* this answer he finds written at the bottom of the petition, but with this clause of admonition for time to come, added, *But let them not return again to folly :* a good use to be made of so gracious an answer.

Cap. I.

CHAP. I.

The main observation and subject of this Discourse thence deduced; That Gods people are diligently to observe the answers to their Prayers : The reasons of it.

THese words being especially spoken in relation to the answer of God returned to his prayer made; therefore in that relation I mean principally to handle them.

The observation is this; *That when a man hath put up prayers to God, he is to rest assured, that God will in mercy answer his prayers, and to listen dilligently, and observe how his prayers are answered: both are here to be observed. I will hear what God will speak, that is, how he will accomplish them; and withall he confidently expresseth*

preſſeth an aſſurance, that God *Cap. 1.*
will ſpeak peace. Thus doth the
 Church, *Mich. 7. 7, 8. I will look*
to the Lord, I will wait, my God
will hear me : She was both ſure
 of gracious audience with Him,
my God will hear me : and ſhe will
wait till he answers her : and ob-
 ſerve how he doth it, *I will look*
to the Lord : and verſe 9. *I will*
bear the indignation of the Lord,
till he plead my cauſe. So Habak-
 kuk, he having made a Prayer a-
 gainſt the tyranny of *Nebuchad-*
nezar, in the firſt Chapter, ha-
 ving ended it, he begins the ſe-
 cond Chapter thus, *I will ſtand*
upon my watch-tower, and ſee what
he will answer me : and in the end
 an answer comes *verſe 2.* And
 as he thus waited for a Viſion
 (for ſometime their Prophecies
 were in answer to their prayers)
 ſo ſhould we for an answer unto
 ours.

The ſin-
 fulneſs of
 the neg-
 lect here-
 of demon-
 ſtrated by
 ſeven rea-
 ſons.

Cap. I. 1. Reason, Because otherwise
Reas. 1. you take an Ordinance of God in
 Hereby an Ordinance of God is taken in vain; which is Gods Name.
 vain in your hearts, which is to take Gods Name (with whom in that Ordinance you deal) in vain: for it is a signe you think your prayer not an effectuall means to attain that end it is ordained for; and say secretly in your hearts, as they, *Job 21. 15. What profit have we, if we pray to him?* For if we use any means, and expect not the end, it is a signe we think the means vain to accomplish that end. Whereas every faithfull prayer is ordained of God to be a means to obtain what we desire and pray for, and is not put up in vain, but shall have answer: *1 Joh. 5. 14, 15. This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us:* 'tis true, God heareth an enemy, but to hear with favour, is the bearing

hearing there meant; and is so used in our ordinary speech, as we say of a Favourite, that he hath the Kings eare; and if a man be *obstinate to a mans counsel*, we say, *he would not hear*, though he give the hearing; so here, *to hear* is a word of gracious inclination to doe the things required; and thus Gods ears are said to be *open to their prayers*; and so it follows there, *that if he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.* As soon as we have prayed, we are laid *to have our petitions*, that is, they are then granted, and we may be confident they are assented unto by God; although in regard of outward dispensation, the command for accomplishment is not yet come forth: even as a petitioner is laid *to have his suit*, when the word of the King is gone forth that

Cap. I. it shall be done, though it passeth not the Seal, or be not signed a good while after. And like as when a wicked man sinneth, as soon as the act is committed, so soon doth sentence from God go forth against the sinner, but the *Execution* overtakes him not (it may be) a good while after, according to that of Solomon, *Sentence against an evil doer is not presently executed, it is presently sentenced*, as the words imply, but not *executed* : so in like manner falleth it out, when a godly man prayes, that as soon as the prayer arrives in Heaven (which is in an instant) so soon is the petition granted, (So *Dan. 9. at the beginning* of his prayer the *Command came forth, vers. 23.* though the *Angel*, who brought the answer, arrived not at him till towards the end in the Evening, *ver. 21.*) but the real accomplishment

ment of it may be deferred. So Cap. 1.
as no prayer in respect of an answer to it is in vain; but where God hath given a heart to speak, he hath an eare to heare, and love to return an answer; which not to regard, is to take an Ordinance in vain, which is Gods Name.

And secondly, not simply *Reas. 2.*
Gods Name, as in an Ordinance We take the Attributes of God in vain.
made known, but also His Name, that is, His Attributes are taken in vain: For it is a signe you think of that God you pray to, that either *his eare is heavy, that he cannot hear; or his hand shortned, that he cannot save; or his heart straitned, and his bowels restrained, that he will not:* And thus you rob him, and despoil him of one of his most Royal Titles, whereby he styles himself, a God that heareth prayers; *Psal. 65. 2.*
who is so regardfull of them,

Cap. i. it shall be done, though it passeth not the Seal, or be not signed a good while after. And like as when a wicked man sinneth, as soon as the act is committed, so soon *doth sentence* from God go forth against the sinner, but the *Execution* overtakes him not (it may be) a good while after, according to that of *Solomon*, *Sentence against an evil doer is not presently executed, it is presently sentenced*, as the words imply, but not *executed* : so in like manner falleth it out, when a godly man prays, that as soon as the prayer arrives in Heaven (which is in an instant) so soon is the petition granted, (So *Dan. 9. at the beginning* of his prayer the *Command came forth, vers. 23.* though the *Angel*, who brought the answer, arrived not at him till towards the end in the Evening, *ver. 21.*) but the real accomplishment

Ecc. 7 | 11

ment of it may be deferred. So Cap. 1. as no prayer in respect of an answer to it is in vain; but where God hath given a heart to speak, he hath an eare to heare, and love to return an answer; which not to regard, is to take an Ordinance in vain, which is Gods Name.

And secondly, not simply *Reas. 2.* Gods Name, as in an Ordinance We take the Attributes of God in vain. made known, but also His Name, that is, His Attributes are taken in vain: For it is a signe you think of that God you pray to, that either *his eare is heavy, that he cannot hear; or his hand shortned, that he cannot save; or his heart straitned, and his bowels restrained, that he will not:* And thus you rob him, and despoil him of one of his most Royal Titles, whereby he styles himself, a God that heareth prayers; *Psal. 65. 2.* who is so regardfull of them,

Cap. 1. that in the first of *Kings* 8. 59. they are said to be *nigh the Lord day and night*, they are all before him, and he sets them in his view, as we doe Letters of friends which we stick in our windows, that we may remember to answer them, or lay them not out of our bosoms, that we might be sure not to forget them : so the petitions of his people pass not out of his sight, till he sends an *answer*, which is called *speaking* here; God *speaking* as well in his works as in his word. But you, by your neglect herein, make an Idoll God of him, such as were the *vanities of the heathen*, as if he had ears and heard not, eyes and saw not your need, &c. Such a God as *Elias* mockt, *You must speak aloud* (saith he) *he may be in a journey*, &c. Even such a God do you make the God of heaven and earth to be, whilest

whilest you put no more confidence in him, or make no more reckoning of your *prayers* to him than the *heathens* did of their *sacrifices* to their *gods*. Petitioners doe not onely put up their request, but use to wait at great *mens* *dores*, and enquire, and listen what answer is given unto them; and it is part of an *honor* to great men that we doe so: and for the same end are we also to wait on God, as an acknowledgement of his *greatness*, and our *distance* from him, and *dependance* upon him; as the eyes Pr. 123.2. of the servants look to the hand of their Masters; so doe we (saith David) on thee, till thou hast mercy on us. And Psal. 130. after he had prayed, vers 2. he saith, he waited more than they that watch for the morning, like those that having some great business to doe on the morrow, long for the
the

Cap. 1. the day light, and look often out to spy the day, so he for a glimmering and dawning of an answer. The like we have Ps. 5. 3. *In the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and look, that is, for an answer.*

Reas 3. Again, 3. If God doth give you an answer, if you minde it not, you let God speak to you in vain, when you doe not listen to what he answers; If two men walk together, and the one, when himself hath said and spoke what he would, listens not but is regardless of what the other answers, he exceedingly sleights the man; *As non respondere, pro convitio est*, not to answer again is contempt; so *non attendere*, not to attend to what one sayes. Now our speaking to God by prayers, and his speaking to us by answers thereunto, and to study his dealings with

us, by comparing our prayers Cap. 1.
and his answers together, which
are as *Dialogues* between us and
him, is one great part of our
walking with God. It is said of
Samuels Prophecy, that not a word of it fell to the ground : and ^{19.} *Sam. 3.*
so it may be said of our prayers;
and so it ought to be of *Gods an-*
swers, not a word of them should fall
to the ground : as there doth, if
you by your observation and
listning thereunto catch them
not, (as *Benhadads* servants are
said to doe *Ahabs* words) appre-
hend, and observe them not :
and by the same reason that you
are to observe the fulfilling of
Gods promises, you are of your
prayers also : Now, *1 King. 8.*
56. it is said, not one word failed
of all he promised. *Solomon* had
observed this by a particu-
lar survey, and register made of
all that *God* had spoken and
done

Cap. I. done for them, and found not a promise unperformed : and there is the like reason both of answers to prayers; (for *prayers are but putting promises into suit*;) and for our observing of them : And therefore *Solomon* brings those words in there to this very purpose, to confirm their faith in this, that no prayers made would fail, being grounded on a promise, thereby to encourage others, and his own heart to diligence herein, as also as a motive unto God to hear him; for *versf. 59.* he infers upon it, *let my words be nigh thee, &c.* Seeing thou always thus performest thy good word unto thy people.

Reas. 4. 4. Yea, you will provoke God may the Lord not to answer at all, he be provoked not to answer at all. will forbear to answer, because he sees it will be thus in vain. When a man is talking to one that

that listens not to him, he will Cap. i.
 cease to answer, and leave off
 speaking, and so will God. So
 as that which the *Apostle* saith
 of faith, that it is not enough to be- Heb. 10. 36
 lieve, but when you have done the
 will of God, you have need of pati-
 ence to ecke out faith, that you
 may inherite the promises, may be
 also said, and is alike true of
 praying : it is not enough to
 pray, but after you have prayed,
 you have need to listen for an
 answer, that you may receive
 your prayers ; God will not ful-
 fill them else. As he said, *The*
Sermon was not done, when yet
 the Preacher had done, because
 it is not done till practised : so
 our prayers are not done, when
 yet made, but you must further
 wait for, and attend the accom-
 plishment.

5. If you observe not his an- Reas 5.
 swers, how shall you bless God
 and

Cap. 1. and return thanks to him for
 We shall hearing your prayers? *Psal. 116.*
 not return 1, 2. *I love the Lord, because he*
 thanks to God for *hath heard my voyce, and my sup-*
 hearing us *plication, and therefore he goes*

Col. 4. 2.

on to thank him, throughout
the whole Psalm. You are to
watch unto prayer with thanksgiv-
ing : and therefore, as to
 watch, to observe, and recol-
 lect your own wants, which you
 are to pray for, that you may
 have matter of requests to put
 up, so also to observe Gods an-
 swers for matter of thanksgiving;
 and many fill that common-
 place-head full of matter, to fur-
 nish them for petitioning, but as
 for this other of thanksgiving,
 they watch not unto it against
 they come to pray, nor study
 matter for that head also; and
 if any study will furnish you this
 way, it is the studying out of
 Gods answers to your prayers:

The

The reason you pray so much, **Cap. 1.** and give thanks so little, is, that you minde not Gods answers, you doe not study them. When we have put up a faithfull prayer, God is made our Debtor by promise, & we are to take notice of his payment, and give him an acknowledgement of the receipt of it, he loseth of his glory else.

6. As God loseth, so your *Reas. 6.* selves also the experience which *We lose much experience.* you might get hereby. 1. Both *I.* experience of God and his *Of Gods faithfulness to us.* faithfulness, which will cause in you hope and confidence in God another time, when you have found him again and again answering your prayers. It was a speech of one eminent in holiness, upon occasion of the accomplishment of a great request made to God by him, that God having never denied him any request; *I have tryed God often,*
now

Cap. I. *now (says he) henceforth I will trust him ; if the hearing the prayers of another will encourage us to goe to God, (as Psal. 33. 5. For this cause shall every one that is godly pray unto thee) much more when we observe, and have experience that our own are heard : Therefore (sayes David) Psal. 116. 1, 2. The Lord hath heard me, and I will call upon him as long as I live : as if he had said, Now that God hath heard me, now I know what to doe : this experiment, if I had no more, is enough to encourage me for ever to pray unto God : I have learned by it to call upon him, as long as I live. And also 2. by observing Gods answers to your prayers, you will gain much insight into your own hearts, and wayes, and prayers; and may thereby learn how to judge of them. So Psal.*

2.
Of our
own hearts
and wayes
toward
him.

66. 18, 19. *David's assurance that* Cap. I.
he did not regard iniquity in his heart, was strengthened by Gods having heard his prayers; for thus he reasons, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me : But God hath heard me.* For 1. if God doth not grant your petitions, it will put you to study a reason of that his dealing : and so you will come to search into your prayers, and the carriage of your hearts therefore, to see whether you *did not pray amiss* ; according to that, *Ye lust and have not, because ye ask amiss, James 4. 3.* As if you send to a friend, who is punctual in that point of friendship of returning answers, and useth not to fail, and you receive no answer from him, you will begin to think there is something in it: and so also here, When a petition is denied, you will be jealous

Cap. 1. lous of your selves, and inquisitive, what should be the matter, and so by that search come to see *that* in your prayers, which you will learn to mend the next time. Or 2. if they be answered, yet because that therein usually God deals in a proportion with you to your prayers, (as you might perceive if you would observe his dealings with you) you would by this means come to have much insight into Gods acceptation, and opinion of your wayes : For you should see his dealings with you and yours with Him, to be exceeding parallel and correspondent, and hold proportion each with other. So *Psal. 18. 6. In my distress I called upon the Lord,* and so *vers 7. 8. &c.* he goes on to describe his deliverance which was the fruit of those prayers, and then at 20, 21. ver-

les, &c. he adds his observation **Cap. 1.**
 upon both, *according to the cleanness of my hands hath he dealt with me, &c. For with the pure thou shalt shew thy self pure.*

7. You will lose much of your **Reas. 7.**
 comfort: there is no greater joy **We shall**
 than to see prayers answered, or **lose much**
 to see souls converted by us, **Job.**
16. 24. *Ask and you shall receive,*
that your joy may be full: the re-
 ceiving answers makes joy to a-
 bound and overflow; yea, even
 when we pray for others, if our
 prayers be answered for them,
 our joyes are exceeding great;
 much more when in our own be-
 half: and therein, even in the
 smallest things which a Christian
 doth injoy: doth his comfort ex-
 ceed anothers, that he hath them,
 by vertue of prayers and promi-
 ses: he knows how he came by
 them; *If stoln waters be sweet,* **Pro 9 17.**
And bread eaten in secret, &c. (as
Salomon

Cap. 1. *Solomon saies*) to wicked men; *beg'd meat is much more sweet* to godly men; yea, in the very praying for outward mercies, there is more sweetness, than they have in injoying them. As it is joy to a good heart to see any one converted, but much more to him that is the means of it; *I have no greater joy (sayes S. John) then that my children walk in truth*: So to see God doe good to his Church, and hear others prayers, is a comfort, but much more to see him doe it at a mans own prayers. Therefore when God restores comfort to a drooping soul, he is said, *Esay 57. To restore comfort also to his mourners*, that is, to those that prayed and mourned for him, as well as unto that soul it self, it being a comfort to them to see their prayers answered. Comfort it is many wayes. 1. To hear from God;

God ; as to hear from a friend, *Cap. I.*
though it be but two or three
words, and that about a small
matter, if there be at the bottom
this subscription, *Your loving fa-*
ther, or, *Your assured friend,* it sa-
tisfies abundantly : so also, 2. To
know that God is mindfull of us,
accepts our works, fulfills his
promises : 3. How doth it re-
joyce one to finde another of his
minde in a controversie? but
that God and we should be of
one minde, and concurre in the
desire of the same things ; *not*
two in the earth only agree, but
God who is in heaven and we to
agree, this rejoyceth the heart
exceedingly. And thus it is when
a man perceives his prayer an-
swered. Therefore you lose
much of your comfort in blef-
sings, when you doe not observe
answers to your prayers.

Cap. 2.

CHAP. II.

Three cases propounded: The first, concerning prayers for the Church, and for the accomplishment of such promises as may fall out in ages to come.

NOW as for rules, and helps to finde out Gods meaning towards you in your prayers, and to spee out answers; and how to know when God doth any thing in answer to your prayers, this is the next thing to be handled: wherein, first, I will answer some cases, and queries which may fall out in severall sorts of prayers; about the answering of them:

1. As first, concerning prayers put up for the Church; for the accomplishment of such things as fall out in all ages to come.

2. Con-

2. Concerning prayers made Cap. 2.
for others of your friends, kindred, &c.

3. Concerning those prayers, whether for your selves or others, wherein others joyn with you.

For the first. First, there may be some prayers, which you must be content, never your selves to see answered in this world, the accomplishment of them not falling out in your time: such as are those you haply make for the calling of the Jewes, the utter downfall of Gods enemies, the flourishing of the Gospel, the full purity and liberty of Gods Ordinances, the particular flourishing and good of the society and place you live in: all you whose hearts are right, doe treasure up many such prayers as these, and sow much of such precious seed, which you must be

§. 1.
The full answer to such prayers is to come.

C content

Cap. 2. content to have the Church (it may be) in after Ages, to reap : All which prayers are not yet lost, but will have answers : for as God is an *eternal God*, and *Christs righteousness an everlasting righteousness*, and therefore of *eternal efficacy*, *Dan. 9. 24. Being offered up by the eternal Spirit, Heb. 9. 14.* So are prayers also, which are the work of the eternal Spirit of Christ, made to that God in his Name, and in him are eternally accepted, and of eternal force, and therefore may take place in after Ages. So the prayer that *S. Stephen* made for his persecutors, took place in *Saul* when *S. Stephen* was dead. So *David's* prayer against *Judas*, *Psalms 109. 8, 9.* took effect above a thousand years after, as appears, *Acts 1. 20.* So the prayers of the Church for three hundred years in the Primitive times,

times, that *Kings* might come to the knowledge of the truth, and they lead peaceable and quiet lives in all godliness and honesty, (which *S. Paul* in *Nero's* time exhorted unto, *1 Tim. 2. 2.*) were not answered, and accomplished till *Constantines* time, when the Church brought forth a *Manchilde*. So *Esay 58.* after he had exhorted to, and given directions for fasting and prayer in a right manner, he adjoyneth this promise : Thou shalt raise up the foundation of many generations ; thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, namely for this, because his fasting, and prayers might have influence into many ages yet to come, in the accomplishment of what was prayed for. And that which *Christ* sayes of the *Apostles*, reaping the fruit of *S. John* the Baptists ministry, and the seed he had sown, is in

Cap. 2.

Rev 12. 11

Cap. 2. like manner herein verified; *John*
4. 37. One soweth and another
reapeth. And in this sence that
 which the Papists say is true,
 that there is a common treasury
 of the Church, not of their *me-*
rits, but of their *prayers*: There
 are *bottles of tears* a filling, *Vi-*
alls a filling to be poured out
 for the destruction of *Gods ene-*
mies: what a collection of pray-
 ers hath there been these many
 ages towards it? And that may
 be one reason why God will doe
 such great things towards the
 end of the world, even because
 there hath been so great a stock
 of prayers going for so many a-
 ges, which is now to be returned:
 and herein it falls out to us in our
 prayers as in their prophecies to the
 Prophets of old, *The Spirit in them*
did signifie the suffering of Christ,
and the glory that should follow. Un-
to whom it was revealed, that not
 unto

1 Pet. I.
 11.

unto themselves, but unto us they Cap. 2.
 did minister the things that are now
 revealed : and thus is it in the spi-
 rit of prayer, which is in stead of
 the spirit of prophecy : for we pray
 through the guidance of the Spi-
 rit (who teacheth us what to ask)
 for many things that come to
 pass in after Ages.

Only at present, it may be, in §. 2.
 prayer thou hast revealed unto Yet they
 thee by a secret impression made may have
 on thy spirit, that these things an answer
 shall come to pass, and so hast at present,
 thy faith confirmed in them, and in assu-
 withall an evidence, that even rance both
 for thy prayers, among others, that they
 God will perform them; and shall come
 that the contribution of thy to pass,
 prayers, doth help to make up and of the
 the summe : and upon such pray- acceptati-
 ers, God usually for the present on of our
 also testifies the acceptation of a persons for
 mans person, and reveals himself them.
 most to him that he is his; as he
 C 3 did

Cap. 2. did to *Moses*; he never revealed his love to *Moses* more, than when he prayed most for Gods people. And haply thou hast that as one of thy best evidences of the uprightness of thy heart, that thou canst pray for the Churches good, though for a long time to come, which thou mayest never behold with thine eyes, even as *David* also did, and rejoyced in it.

§. 3. And when they are accomplished, and thou in heaven, thy joy will surely be the more full for these thy prayers; as at the conversion of those thou hast prayed for, so at the ruine of the Churches enemies, &c. whom thou didst pray against; For if there be joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner, (as at the birth of a new Prince and Heir of heaven) then haply in a proportion he shall rejoyce most, whose prayers

And in heaven we shall rejoyce at the accomplishment of them: and at the day of Judgment.

prayers had most hand in, and a Cap. 3. special interest therein. And so as thy other works, so thy prayers follow thee, and the fruit of them, as *Jeremy* speaks: and how- Jer. 17. 10. ever, yet at the day of Judgment thou shalt rejoyce, as well as they that enjoyed the fruit of thy prayers in their times, thou having sown the seed of their happiness; both he that sows, and he that reaps shall then rejoyce together, as *Christ* sayes, *Job. 4.* 56.

CHAP. III.

The second case, concerning prayers made for others : of our friends, &c. How they are answered.

THe second case is, concerning answers to our prayers for others, for particular men, as

C 4

friends,

Cap. 2. friends, and kindred, &c, and likewise for temporall blessings.

Pray for others, you know we must: so the Elders of the Church for those that are sick, *James 5. 15, 16. Pray one for another*, sayes Saint *James*, as in case a man is troubled with a lust, tell some private friend of it, *Confess your sinnes one to another*; that when a mans own prayers are not strong enough to cast it out, it may be done by the help of anothers prayers joyned with his. (So it followes, *That ye may be healed*, ver. 16. For in that sense I understand healing, in ver. 16. (So also, *1 John 5. 16. If a man see his brother sin a sinne, which is not unto death*, that is not against the Holy Ghost, *he shall ask life for him, and God shall give him life, that sinnes not unto death*.)

Concerning this case I give these

these considerations, how such prayers are answered. Cap. 3.

1. Consideration. Such pray- §. I.
 ers God often heareth; why else Such prai-
 ers for o-
 thers God
 often
 granteth,
 are any such promises made? as *That they shall be healed in their bodies, Jam. 5. 15. healed of their lusts, vers. 16. converted to life, 1 Joh. 5. 16.* God hath made these to encourage us to pray, and to testifie his abundant love to us; that it so overflows and runs over, that he will hear us, not only for our selves, but for others also; which is a signe we are in extraordinary favour. So God intimates concerning *Abraham, to Abimelech, Gen. 20. 7. He is a Prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live:* and as he was a Prophet, so we are Priest; as for our selves, so for others also, to *GOD our Father:* and it is a prerogative we have through the fellowship we have, and com-
munion

Cap. 3. munion of *CHRISTS Priestly Office*, who hath made us Kings and
 Rev. 1. 6 *Priests*, to prevail and intercede for others; and a special token and pledge of extraordinary love. For if God hears a mans prayers for others, much more for himself in his own behalf. So when Christ healed the man sick of the palsie, it was, as it is said, *For the faith of the standers by*, Matth. 9. 2. *He seeing their faith, said, Thy sins are forgiven thee*; the meaning is, not as if for their faith sake he forgave that
 Heb. 2. 4. man his sinnes; for, *The just doth live by his (own) faith*: but to encourage them, who out of faith brought that sick man to him; and us all in like manner to bring others, and their plaints, by prayer, before him; he therefore then took occasion to declare and pronounce forgiveness to that poor man; he therefore then
 said,

said, *Thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Cap. 3.

2. Consideration : yet secondly, prayers for others may often also not obtain the particular thing prayed for them. So *Samuels* prayer for *Saul*, 1 Sam. 15. 3. 5. So *David* for his enemies, *Psal.* 37. 13.

§. 2.

Yet alwaies they doe not prevail for the parties prayed for

For it is in this, as it is in the use of other means and Ordinances for the good of others; God making such like kinde of promises to our prayers herein, as he hath made to our endeavor to convert when we preach to men: that look as we preach to many, and yet but few beleeve, for, *Who hath beleeved our report?* even as many as are ordained to eternal life; we become all to all, and winne but some: So we pray for many, not knowing who are ordained to eternal life, which whilest we know not, we are yet to pray for them, 1 Tim.

2, 3, 4.

Cap. 3. 2,3,4. Onely as where God hath set his Ordinance of Preaching, it is more than a probable signe he hath some to convert, and usually the word takes among some, though often but a few: so when he hath stirred up our hearts to pray for others, it is a signe God will hear us for some of those we pray for; yet so as we may be denied. For God doth require it as a duty on our parts, because it is an outward means ordained by God, by which sometimes He useth to bring things to pass, but yet not as such a certain and infallible means, as he hath tied himself universally unto, to bring the thing to pass on his part.

Such pro-
mises to
us for
be-

And though indeed his promise to hear and accept the prayer is general and universal: yet the promise to hear it, by granting

granting the very thing it self Cap. 3.
prayed for, is but an indefinite
promise; such as he makes to
other means of doing men
good, as to our admonitions and
reproofs, and to our preaching,
&c. *He makes such promises, be-
cause sometimes he doth hear, and
convert by them.* For instance,
that promise, Jam. 5. 15 *of healing
the sick*, cannot be universal: for
it might then be supposed as a
truth implied in it, that sick
men might never dye, when as
it is appointed for all men once to Heb. 9 27.
die, seeing it may be supposed
that the elders may at all such
times of danger of death still
come and pray with them: but
the meaning is, that it is an Or-
dinance, which God hath made
a gracious promise unto, because
he often doth restore the sick at
their prayers: and therefore up-
on every such particular occa-
sion

- **Cap. 3.** sion, we are to relie upon God for the performance of it, by an act of recumbency, though with an act of full assurance that we shall obtain it, we cannot; the promise not being universal, but indefinite.

Illustrated
by the like
tenour of
all promi-
ses of
things
temporal

Of the like nature are all other promises of things temporal and outward, (of which we herein speake) as when God promiseth to *give long life* to them that *honour their Parents; riches and honors to them that fear Him;* the tenour and purport of which promises is not, as if absolutely, infallibly, and universally God doth alwaies perform these to those that are yet truly qualified with the conditions specified in those promises; the contrary both Scripture, instances, and common experience shews: they are therefore indefinitely meant, and so to be understood by

by us; for, because when ever Cap. 3.

God doth dispense any such mercies to any of his, he would doe it by promise; *All his wayes to His being truth*, that is, the fulfilling of some truth promised; and also God having purposed in his outward dispensation of things here in this world, to bestow riches and honours upon some that fear him, (though not upon all, for how then should *all things fall alike to all?* Pover-

Eccle. 9. 2.

ty and contempt upon them that *fear God*, even as well as those that *fear him not*. He hath therefore indefinitely expressed his gracious dispensation herein: requiring answerably an act of faith (which principle in us is suited to a promise, as a faculty is to its proper object) suitable to that his meaning in the promise; That as he intended not in such promises an ab-

The faith towards them required to be an indefinite act of recumbency, not of assurance.

so'ue,

Cap. 3. solute, infallible, universal, obligation of himself to the performance of them to all that fear him : so the act of faith which a man is to put forth toward this promise, in the application of it for his own particular, is not required to be an absolute, infallible persuasion, and assurance, that God will bestow these outward things upon him, having these qualifications in him ; but onely an *indefinite act* (as I may so call it) of *recumbency and submission* ; casting and adventuring our selves upon him for the performance of it to us, not knowing but he may in his outward dispensations make it good to us, yet with submission to His good pleasure, if otherwise he disposeth it.

Though of
assurance
to the pro-
mise in ge-

It is true indeed, that that act of *general assent*, which faith is to give to this promise in the *general*

general abstract truth of it, is to be an assured certain perswasion and belief, that God hath made this promise, and that He certainly will, and doth perform it unto some, according to his purpose expressed therein; which act of general assent, is that *beleieving without wavering*, namely of the truth of the promise in general, which St. James calls for in prayer, James 1.6. But yet that special act of application (as Divines call it) required in this faith, whereby I am to rest upon it for my own particular, is not required to be such an undoubted perswasion, as to think that I shall certainly have this particular Promise in kinde fulfilled to me; for the truth, purpose, and intent of the promise, is not universal, but indefinite. So as it is but an *it may be* (as
 God

Cap. 3.
 nerall, yet
 not in the
 applicati-
 on of it.

Cap. 3. God else where expresseth such promises, as *Zeph. 2. 1. 2.*) that it shall be performed to me: and yet because *it may be* God will perform it unto me, therefore my duty is to cast my self upon God; and put in for it, with submission to His good pleasure for the performance of it to me. So that so far as the truth and intent of it, is revealed to be infallible and certain, so far a man is bound to have an answerable act of *faith*, of certain and infallible perswasion towards it, as to beleve without wavering that God hath made such a promise, and will perform it according to His intent in making it, which is *unto some*: but yet withall because the tenour of it is but indefinite, and in that respect, whether it shall be performed to me or no, is not therein certainly revealed; Therefore God requires

requires not of me in the application of such a promise an absolute full perswasion that he will perform it to me in such or such a manner, &c. But only an act of dependence and adherence with referring it to his wise and righteous good pleasure towards me. Cap. 3.

And yet again, if God should at any time give a man such a special *Faith* concerning any such particular temporal blessing for himself or another, then he is bound to believe it thus in particular : as when He gave power to any to work miracles, (as to his Apostles He did, with a Commission to work them) then they were bound to believe that such and such a miracle should infallibly be wrought by them; as that the Devils should be cast out by them, &c. And therefore in this case

Yet when God sometimes gives a special faith, then we are to be assured the thing shall be done.

Christ

Cap. 3. Christ rebukes His Disciples, for not believing thus upon such particular occasions, *Matth.* 17. 20. And then it is also true, that if God give such a *Faith*, He will infallibly perform it : and thus those his words are to be understood, *Matth.* 27. 22. *Whatsoever ye ask in faith believing, ye shall receive*, he speaks it of the Faith of *miracles*, for 21. *vers.* he had said, *If ye believe and doubt not, ye shall say to this Mountain, remove into the sea, and it shall be removed* : so that when God works such a faith, and we are called to it, we are bound to believe with a certain perswasion that such a thing will be done and it shall be done ; but unto such a kinde of special faith in temporal promises for our selves or others, God doth not now alwayes call us. If indeed at any time we did believe and doubted

An objection prevented.

doubted not, by reason of a special faith wrought by God, that God would remove a Mountain into the Sea, or bestow any outward mercy, it should be done: for he that stirred up such a *faith*, would accomplish the thing: but it is not that, which God requires of believers, that they should without doubting thus believe concerning outward things; the promises thereof being not universal, but indefinite; and therefore answerably a man is not absolutely bound to believe that God will certainly bestow such a temporal blessing on him, no not though he should have the qualification, which the promise is made unto, the promise being not universal, made to all so qualified, but indefinite to some of such so qualified. The case is the same of believing promises

Cap. 3.

Cap. 3. promises made to our praying for others, which is the thing in hand.

§ 3.
Such
prayers
for others
are often
returned
into our
own bo-
some.

3. When the prayers are thus made out of conscience of our duty for such, whom yet God doth not intend that mercy unto, then they are returned again into our own bosomes to our advantage : even as S. Paul saith, *that his rejoycing that others preached, though they lost their labor, should turn to his salvation, Phil. 1. 20.* So prayers for others, though to the parties themselves we prayed for, they prove in vain, yet they turn to our good. So Ps. 35. 12, 13. *When his enemies were sick, David he prayed and humbled himself, and my prayers (sayes he) returned into my bosome. David did by this his prayer in secret for his enemies, testifie the sincerity of his heart to God, and his true forgive-
ness*

ness of them, (for it is the usu- Cap. 3.
all disposition of Gods Chil-
dren, to pray for them that are
the greatest enemies to them)
and this prayer though it did
not profit them, yet it turned to
Dauids own good, it came back,
and home again to him, with
blessings to himself; God de-
lighting in, and rewarding such
a disposition in his childe, as
much as any other; because
therein we resemble *Christ* so The Rea-
son.
truly, and shew that God is our
Father, and our selves to have
his bowels in us; and God stir-
reth up this praying disposition
in his children for their ene-
mies, not alwayes that he means
to hear them for them, but be-
cause he means to draw forth,
and so have an occasion to re-
ward those holy dispositions,
which are the noblest parts of
his Image in them, and where-
with

Cap. 3. with he is so much delighted; and so their prayers return into their own bosomes, and it is taken, as if they had prayed for themselves all that while. Thus in like manner, when *Moses* prayed so earnestly for the people of *Israel*, God offered to return his prayer into his own bosome, and doe as much for him alone, as he had desired that God would doe for them.

Exod. 32. *I will make of thee a great Nation,*
 13. (sayes God to him) for whom I will doe as much for thy sake, as thou hast prayed I should doe for these. As in preaching the Gospel, *Christ* told the Disciples, That if in any house they came to preach peace, there were not a *Son of peace*, *Luke 10.* on whom the message might take place, and their peace rest, *Your peace* (sayes he) *shall return unto you again.* So is it, if your prayers

prayers take not place.

Cap. 3.

4. If we have prayed long for those whom God intends not mercy unto, he will in the end cast them out of our prayers and hearts, and take our hearts off from praying for them. That which he did by a revelation from heaven to some Prophets of old, as to *Samuel* and *Jeremiah*, the same he doth by a more undiscerned work; that is, by withdrawing assistance to pray for such; by withdrawing the spirit of supplication from a man, for some men, and in some businesses. Now thus he did with *Samuel*; *Why dost thou mourn for Saul?* 1 Sam. 16. 1. So with *Jeremiah*, Jer. 7. 16. *Pray not for this people*: and this he doth, because he is loath when his people doe pray but to hear them; and would not that such precious breath as that of pray-

§ 4.

God often in the end casts such out of our prayers, as he intends not to hear us for.

The Reason.

D

er

Cap. 3. er is, should be without its full and direct successe, or be in vain: therefore when he means not to hear, he layes the key of prayer out of the way, so desirous is he to give answers to every prayer. It falls out in this case of praying for another, as in reprovng another. One whom God intends not good unto, God will lock up a mans heart towards such a man, that he shall not be able to reprove him; when towards another, God doth inlarge it as much, where he intends good; thus it is sometimes in praying for another: so as in praying a man shall not be able to pray for, as not to reprove such a man, though his heart was to doe both: but it fareth with him as God th'earneth concerning *Ezekiel* towards that people, that he makes his *tongue cleave*

to the roof of his mouth. Cap. 3.

4. God will hear those pray- § 5.
ers for, and answer them in some others, in whom we shall have as much comfort, as in these we prayed for : and so it often proves and falls out. God, to shew *he looks not as man looks*, nor chooseth as he chooseth, lets our hearts be let on work to pray for the conversion or good of one he intends not mercy to; and then answers them in some other, whom He makes as dear unto us. When God had cast off *Saul*, still *Samuel's* heart lingered after him, and he mourned for him : but God at the same time, when he bids him cease mourning for *Saul*, 1 Sam. 16. to shew that yet he accepted that his mourning as it came from him; Goe, (sayes he) *and anoints one of the Sons of Jesse*, 1 Sam. 16 1.

God
sometimes
answers,
whom we
prayed not
for.
The Rea-
son.

Cap. 3. *Samuel* desired to see a good successor in that government, and he having been their ruler, it was his special care; and he having anointed *Saul*, it exceedingly grieved him, that he should prove so wicked; and God saw and answered the ground of his desires; and therefore immediately upon his prayers, sent him to anoint the best King that ever was upon that Throne, who was the issue and Man-childe of those his prayers. And again, when *Samuel* came to anoint one of the sonnes of *Jesse*; when he saw *Eliab*, verse 6. Surely (saies he) the Lords anointed is before me: If *Samuel* had been to choose, he would have chosen him, and would have prayed for and desired him: but God seeth not as man seeth, verse 7. and chooseth not as man chooseth: but in

in *David* was his prayer fully Cap. 3.
heard, and answered, and that
better. So *Abraham* had prayed
for *Ishmael*; and *Oh let Ishmael*
live in thy sight ! Gen. 17. but
God gave him *Isaac* in stead of
him. So perhaps thou prayest
for one childe more than for a-
nother, out of thy natural affe-
ction looking on his countenance
and stature; as *Samuel* did on *E-*
liabs : but yet thy prayers be-
ing sincere in the ground of
them, in that thou desirest a
childe of promise, God there-
fore answers thee, though in a-
nother, for whom yet haply,
thy heart was not so much stir-
red; who yet when he is con-
verted, proves to thee as great
a comfort, and it is as much as
if that other thou didst not pray
for, had been wrought upon.

Cap. 4.

CHAP. IV.

The third Case, about such prayers wherein others joyn with us : How therein to discern the influence of our own prayers.

THe third Case to be considered is, when a man prays for something with others; or which others likewise pray for with him, so as he is not alone in it; how then should he know, that his prayers have a hand in obtaining it, as well as theirs? For in such cases *Satan* is apt to object, though the thing is granted indeed; yet not for thy prayers, but for the prayers of those others joyned in it with thee.

§ I.

If our hearts were affected in praying with the same holy

I. If thy heart did sympathize, and accord in the same holy affections with those others in praying, then it is certain thy voice hath helpt to carry it; *If*

two

two agree on earth (sayes Christ) Cap. 4.

Matt. 18. 19. the word is *συμφωνῶντες*, that is, if they harmonially agree to play the same tune : for affections wherewith others that prayed with us were.

and so called *Melody to God*, Ephes. 5. 19. It is not simply their agreeing in the thing prayed for, but in the affections : for it is the affections that make the consort and the melody : now if the same holy affections were toucht, and struck by Gods spirit in thy heart, that in theirs, then thou dost help to make up the consort, and without thee it would have been imperfect : yea, without thee the thing might not have been done ; for God stands sometimes upon such a number of voices, and one voice casts it, as when he named ten righteous persons to save *Sodome* : when therefore the same holy motive and affections acted thee in thy

D 4 prayer,

Cap.4. prayer, which did them in theirs, it was the work of the same Spirit, both in them and thee, and God hath heard thee.

Especially
when this
sympathy
unbe-
known
each to o-
ther.

Especially if God did stir up the same secret instinct in thee, to Sympathize with another in praying for such a thing unknown one to another, as sometimes it falls out; then surely thy prayers are in it as well as his. You shall observe sometimes a general instinct of the Spirit, put into Gods peoples hearts, generally to pray for or against a thing, without each others stirring up one another: even as *Ezekiel* by the river *Chebar* prophecyed the same things *Jeremiah* did at home at *Jerusalem*. Thus against the time that *Christ* the *Messiah* came in the flesh, there was a great expectation raised up in the hearts of the godly people, to look and pray
for

for him, *Luke 2. 27. and 38.* **Cap. 4.**

2. God doth usually, and often evidence to a man, that his prayers contributed, and went among the rest towards the obtaining of it; as, **§. 2.**

By some special evidence: as first, sometimes by some notable circumstance.

1. By some circumstance: as for example, sometimes by ordering it so, that that man that prayed most for a thing of concernment, should have the first news of it when it comes to be accomplished; which God doth, as knowing it will be most welcome news to him. God doth herein, as we doe with a friend, who we know is cordial in, and wisheth well to a businesse; he sends him the first word of it, who was most hearty in it, and prayed most about it. Good old *Simeon*, had surely been earnest in seeking the Lord, as well as the rest in *Jerusalem*, to send the *Messiah* into the world, to restore and

Cap. 4. raise up the ruines of *Israel*, for God did reveal to him, that he should see him before he died: and therefore to evidence to him his respect to his prayers, God carried the good old man into the Temple, just at the time when the Child was brought into the Temple, for to be presented to the Lord, *Luke 2. 27, 28.* And in like manner good *Anna*, who had served God with fasting and prayer night and day: God ordereth it so, that she must also come in at the same instant, *Luke 2. 38.* By some such like peculiar circumstance or other, doth God often use, to witness to a mans heart, that he hath heard him in businesses, prayed for in common with others.

Secondly,
b, the
hearts be-
ing filled
with much
joy in the
accom-
plishment.

2. By filling the heart with much joy in the accomplishment of what a man prayed for: which is an evident argument that his prayers

prayers did move the Lord to Cap. 4.
 effect it, as well as the prayers of
 others. Thus that good old Si-
 meon, seeing his prayers now an-
 swered, he was even willing to
 die, through joy; and thought
 he could not die in a better time;
Lord now let thy servant depart in
peace. For when the desires have
 vented and laid out much of
 themselves, then when the re-
 turn comes home, they have an
 answerable part and share in the
 comfort of it: and as desires a-
 bounded in praying, so will joy
 and comfort also in the accom-
 plishment. As when a Ship
 comes home, not only the chief
 owners, but every one that ven-
 tured, shall have a share out of the
 return, in a proportion to the
 Adventurer: so here, though
 some one whom it mainly con-
 cerns hath especiall interest in
 the mercy obtained, yet thou
 shalt

Cap. 4. shalt have thy prayers out in joy from God, that the thing is granted. Saint Paul had planted a Church at *Thessalonica*, but he could not stay to water it with his own preaching, yet when absent, he waters those Plants which he had set, with prayers night and day, 1 *Thes.* 3. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly for you,* says he : and as his prayers were exceeding abundant for them, so was his joy as abundant in them, when he had heard that they stood steadfast, and fell not back again ; *Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord,* vers. 8. And what thanks can we render to God for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes, before the Lord ? vers. 9.

3. If God give you a heart
 By thank- thankful for a blessing vouchsafed to another, prayed for by
 fulness for it when accomplished, you with others, it is another
 sign

signe your prayers have some Cap. 4.
 hand in it. *St. Paul* knew not
what thanks to give for the an-
 swering of his prayers, as in that
 forementioned place. Old *Eli*
 had put up but one short ejacu-
 latory petition that we read of,
 for *Hannah*, and that was, *The*
Lord grant thy petition, 1 Sam. i.
 17. and for the return of that one
 prayer, when *Hannah* related
 how *God* had answered her, ver.
 16. 27. he returned solemn
 thanks, *And he worshipped the*
Lord there, vers. 28.

And lastly, in case the thing §. 3.
 concerned thy self, which was Especially
 prayed for by others helping when the
 thee therein, what cause hast thing ob-
 thou but to think that it was tained.
 granted for thy own prayers, concerns a
 and not for theirs only? seeing mans own
 God stirred up their hearts to particular
 pray for thee, and gave thee an
 heart to pray for thy self, and
 b fides

Cap. 4. besides gave thee the thing which thou desiredst : which argues, thou art beloved as well as they. *I know this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, faith, S. Paul, Phil. 1. 19.* though their prayers went to the business, yet had not *S. Paul* been accepted himself, the prayers of all the men in the world would have done him but little good. God may hear the prayers of the godly for wicked men, when they do not pray themselves, in temporal things ; so he did hear *Moses* for *Pharoah*, *Abraham* for *Abimelech* ; and he may hear godly men the sooner for others prayers ; so he heard *Aaron* and *Miriam* the sooner for *Moses* his sake, *Numb 12. 13.* But if God stir up thy heart to pray for thy self, as well as others for thee ; then God that gave thee a heart to pray, hath heard thy prayers also,

also, and hath had a respect to Cap. 5. them more in it then to theirs, because it concerned thy self, as a more special mercy unto thee.

CHAP. V.

Common directions, helpfull in all cases and prayers. First from such observations as may be taken from before, and in praying.

HAVING premised these Cases, I come now to more general and common directions to help you in discerning and observing the minde of God, and his answers to you in your prayers. All which directions are such, as may be helpfull in all the forementioned cases, and in all sorts of prayers whatever. And they are taken from observations, to be made

Cap. 5. made upon your prayers, &c.
Both *before, in, and after* praying.

§ 1.

Before :
when God
prepares
the heart
to pray.

First, *Before* praying, when God bespeaks a prayer (as I may so speak) that is, when God secretly speaks to the heart to pray much about a thing; I expresse it thus according to that phrase of *David*, Ps. 27. 8. *Thou said'st, Seek my face :* and I said, *Thy face Lord will I seek :* Now God then speaks to the heart to pray, when not only he puts upon the duty, by saying to the conscience, *This thou oughtest to do :* but Gods speaking to pray is such as his speech at first was, when he made the world, when he said, *Let there be light, and there was light :* So he says, *Let there be a prayer, and there is a prayer,* that is, he poures upon a man a *spirit of grace and supplication*; a praying disposition; he puts in motives, suggests arguments

guments and pleas to God ; all Cap. 5.
which you shall finde come in
readily, and of themselves ; and
that likewise with a quickning
heat, and enlargement of affe-
ctions, and with a lingring, and
longing, and restlesnesse of spi-
rit to be alone, to poure out the
soul to God, and to vent and
form those motions and sugge-
stions into a prayer, till you have
laid them together and made a
prayer of them. And this is a
speaking to the heart : and ob-
serve such times when God
doth thus, and neglect them
not ; then to strike, whilest the
iron is hot ; thou hast then his
care, it is a special opportunity
for that businesse, such an one as
thou mayest never have the like.
Suitors at Court observe *mollis-*
sima fandi tempora, their times of
begging, when they have Kings
in a good mood, which they
will

Cap. 5. will be sure to take the advantage of; but especially if they should finde that the King himself should begin of himself to speak of the businessse which they would have of him: and thus that phrase of *Psal. 10. 17.* is understood by some, that *God prepares the heart, and causeth the eare to hear*; that is, he fashions it, and composeth it into a praying frame. And sure it is a great sign that God means to hear us when himself shall thus indite the Petition.

The difference between Satans unreasonable urging us to pray, and God moving us
 And by the way let me give this note of difference, between these *speaking*s to the heart, and those whereby Satan puts us upon such duties at unreasonable houres and times; as when we are otherwise necessarily to be employed in our Callings, to eate, or to sleep, &c. then to put upon praying is a devise of his he

he useth, to trie out new converts with. The difference will appear in this; the devil comes in a violent imperious manner upon the conscience, but enlargeth not the heart a whit unto the duty: but whensoever God at such extraordinary by-times doth call upon us, he fits and prepares the heart, and fills the soul with holy suggestions, as materials for the duty; for whatsoever he calls to, he gives abilities withall to the thing he calls for. Cap. 5.

And thus usually when he will have any great matters done and effected, he sets mens hearts a work to pray, by a kind of gracious pre-instinct; he stirs them up and toucheth the strings of their hearts, by his Spirit sent down upon them: Thus against the return of the captivity he stirred up *Daniels* heart,
Dan.

Cap. 5. *Dan. 9. 1. He knowing by Books,*
the time to be neer expiring, was
stirred up to seek Good: and so he
that made this *Psalme*, *Salvation*
being then nigh, vers. 9. 10. then
God stirred him up to pray, and
pen this prayer for their return,
which God had foretold he
would doe, *Jer. 29. 10. 11. 12.*
For having promised, *vers. 10.*
I will cause you to return after se-
venty years : Then (says he vers.
12.) shall ye call upon me, and ye
shall goe and pray unto me, and I will
hearken unto you : he speaks it not
onely by way of command,
what it was they ought to doe ;
but as prophecyng also what
they should doe ; for then he
meant to stirre up their hearts ;
as then he did, as appears by
those fore-mentioned instances.
Therefore observe what things
God thus by an instinct, doth
enlarge thy heart to pray for at
times,

times, and sometimes at extra-ordinary by-times, when hap-ly thou diddest not think to pray about any such thing, yet he then stirred thee up most, it may be, as thou wert walking, &c. and having spare time, he drawes thee into his presence, and moves thee in that manner specified.

Now secondly : as God thus speaks to the heart to pray, so also *in praying* ; and his *speaking* to the heart *in prayer* may be discerned by these particulars.

1. When God quiets, and calms, and contents the heart in prayer, which is done by speaking something to the heart, though what is spoken, be not alwayes discerned : It you should see one, who was an earnest and importunate suitor, and exceeding anxious when he went in to a great man

§ 2.

² *in pray-*
^{er}

Gods

speaking
to the
heart in

prayer, an
evidence
of hear-
ing : which
may be
discerned.

1. By gi-
ving a
quiet rest
of spirit a-
bout the
thing prai-
ed for in
and by
prayer.

Cap. 5. man but behold him after coming out from him contented, and quieted, and cheerfull in his spirit, you would conceive that certainly something had been said to him, which gave him encouragement, satisfaction, and contentment in his suit; Thus when thou doest to God, and hast been importunate in a businessse, as suppose for Christ, *Oh give me Christ, or else I die!* and thy desires were exceedingly up for it: But thou risest up with thy minde calmed and satisfied, and feelest the anxiousnesse, the solicitude of thy heart about the things taken off, and dispelled, This is a good sign that God hath heard thy Prayer, and hath spoken something to thy heart, which makes it thus composed. When *Hannah* out of much bitternesse, and with strong desire (which
by

by a long delay, hath been Cap. 5.
made more violent, so as her
heart was much disquieted (for,
Prov. 13. 12. Hope, and by the
same reason, desire also deferred makes the soul sick) when out
of the abundance of her grief,
she had poured her soul out before
the Lord, 1 Sam. 1 16. Eli the
Priest joyning in prayer also for
her, *The Lord grant thy peti-*
tion : after that prayer she found
her heart so quieted, *that she*
looked no more sad, as the Text
saies there; She arose quiered,
and calmed, and it was that
prayer, that did both fill *Elies*
mouth, with that word of pro-
phesy, and her heart with quiet-
ness, and a secret word from
God accompanying it, that did
still those waves : and accor-
dingly God gave her a Son, a
Son of her desires. And the
like God doth now; by speak-
ing

Cap. 5. ing (as I said) something to the heart : as by dropping in some promise or other into the heart, or some like consideration ; saying as it were to the heart, even as *Eli* from God did to her, *The Lord grants thy petition ;* As to *S. Paul*, when he was earnest with God about removing his buffetings by *Satan* (which whether they were the stirring up a lust, or temptations of *Blasphemy*, I doe not now dispute) *I besought God thrice*, that is, earnestly (saies he,) *that it might depart ;* and to this he had an answer in the mean time given him till it should be taken away ; enough to still and quiet him, so *2 Cor. 12. 8, 9* And he said, that is, in prayer the Lord did put in this consideration and promise into his thoughts, And he said unto me, *My grace is sufficient for thee, and my power is*
made

made perfect in weaknesse : This Cap. 5. answer thus comming in, this promise thus seasonably suggested, stayed and quieted *Pauls* heart. In like manner thou hast (it may be) been long *praying* against poverty, or the like distresse, and God lets fall this or the like promise into thy heart, *I Heb. 13 5. will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, which quiets and contents thy minde. This is an answer, and observe such answers, for they are precious.

2. If whilest thou art a *praying*, God doth draw nigh to thy soul, and revealeth himself to it, in and upon such, or such a particular petition. As in case thou didst mainly intend when thou didst begin to pray, to set thy self to beg some temporal mercy at his hands, some great matter for the good and prosperity of the Church, (as *David*,

§. 3.

2 When God draws nigh and reveals His love in and upon such a petition.

E

vid,

Cap. 5 *vid, chap. 9. did set himself to seek God for the return of the captivity : and even before thou comest to ask it, or in asking it, God smiles upon thee, welcomes thee, falleth about thy neck and kisseth thee : This thou art to observe as a sign he hears thy prayer, and accepteth both thee and it; when there is such a strong sense of God's favour, and presence, whilest thou art upon such a suit and request, more than at other times, or than in other passages of the same prayer, this is a token God hears thee, in that particular, and thou art to observe this his speaking to thy heart : When thus thou shalt no sooner come into his presence to enquire of him, but he layes, Here I am, as the promise is, Esay 58. 9. Therefore, Psa. 69. 17, 18 Hear me speedily, layes David, and (that*

(that I may know thou hearest me) *draw nigh to me* : therefore when God draws nigh to thee, it is a sign he hears thee. *Daniel* having *fasted and prayed* for three weeks together, *Dan.* 10. 2, 3. Then an *Angel* came, and one of the three *Persons* came and told him he was a man *greatly beloved*, *ver.* 11. and 19. When in like manner God by his Spirit comes down, and meets thee, and tels thy heart in secret that thou art *His beloved*, and *He is thine*, then thy *prayers* are certainly heard : for it he accepts thy person, much more thy *prayers*, 1 *John* 5. 19, 20. Men, false men, (*false upon the ballance*, as *David* speaks, when they come to be tryed and weighed) they will out of cunning use suitors most kindly then, when they mean to put them off, and deny them their
E 2 requests :

Cap. 5. requests : But God who is truth and faithfulness it selfe, doth not use so to deal, but when he means to answer the *prayer*, He withall sometimes reveals his free grace most, to the end they may see and acknowledge the fountain of all, to be his everlasting love, and so take the thing granted as a fruit of it, and thereby come to be the more abundantly thankful.

A caution,
That yet
this is not
alwaies an
infallible
signe the
thing is
granted,
though
that the
prayer is
accepted.

Onely let me add this Caution, which may be of great use to you. That it is not alwayes infallibly true, that when God draws nigh to you in a particular request, That that request in particular, shall be granted in that manner you desired; but it is a certain evidence that thy *prayer* is heard, and that the thing thou askest is agreeable to his will, and that he approves of

of thee and thy request exceedingly, and thinketh the better of thee for it, and he will give thee it, or something that is better. There may be herein, and sometimes is a mistake of Gods meaning, to think that alwayes, then the thing shall be granted, when God draws nigh to a man: experience sometimes shews the contrary.

But you will say, Why doth God draw so nigh if he means not to grant it? *Quest.*

1. He shews thereby His *approving will* of the thing *prayed* for. Now GOD approves many things, he decrees not. There is his *approving will*, and his *decreeing will*. God may shew his *approving will* of the thing thou askest, (as suppose it be in view a matter which is of great consequence for the Church;) which he doth for thy encouragement:

Ans.
The reasons why God sometimes draws nigh when he grants not the thing.

Cap. 5. but yet it follows not, that his decreeing will is for the accomplishment of that very thing in particular.

2. God may accept the person and the *prayer* when he doth not grant the thing prayed for; and by that drawing nigh witness his acceptation of thy person and the *prayer*, Yea,

3. That revealing of himself is oftentimes all the answer he intended to such a *prayer*, and it is answer enough too, to enjoy in the stead of a particular mercy the assurance of Gods love. As suppose thou didst pray against some evill coming upon his Church, which he yet intends to bring; which he did set thy heart a work to *pray* against, thereby to manifest the sincerity thereof; and then he seeing thee thus sincere, draws nigh to thee, and tells thee, however, it shall goe well
with

with thee, and that thou art greatly beloved of Him : Thou art sometime to take this for all the answer he means to give. And this he doth sometimes also to content the heart, and prepare it for a deniall in the things: whereas, otherwise the deniall of what a Christian hath been earnest in, might occasion (as in many it doth) a questioning and doubting of Gods love.

3. When *God stirres* up in the heart a particular faith in a business; as sometimes He doth, and upholds the heart to wait for it, maugre all discouragements. So he did in *David*, *Psal. 27. 3.* *David* was then in great hazards by reason of *Saul* or *Absolem*, and those such and so often, as that to sense and outward probabilities he was like never to live quietly again at *Jerusalem*, and enjoy Gods Ordinances there in

§. 4.
God sometimes stirs up a particular faith of assurance in some business.

Cap. 5. peace; but for this *David* had *prayed*, and had made it as the grand request of his whole life (as every man hath some one great request of all other, even as He hath some speciall grace above all other, or gift, &c. so request to God next to His salvation, as haply for his Ministry, or the like, therefore sayes *David*, ver. 4. *This one thing have I desired*, and accordingly God gave him a speciall faith in this thing above all other, because it was his great request, *In this will I be confident*, ver. 3. And though *an hoste* of men should again and again *incompass me*, sayes he, yet *in this I will be confident*, that I shall still escape, and see *Jerusalem* again, and enjoy the Ordinances and live in *peace*; and though his *faith* failed him often (as in the perlecution of *Saul* it did) for he sa d he *should one day perish*

1 Sam. 27

1.

perish by the hand of Saul : yet at Cap. 5.
other times his faith was marvellously upheld, and he was *confident* in this. He used not to be so, in other requests thus absolutely particularly and distinctly, and therefore he sayes, *In this, &c.* As there is a witnesse of the *Holy Ghost* immediate to the heart, sealing up adoption to a mans person, so in some cases there is the like testimony for the obtaining of some eminent thing we have asked. Which particular special faith, doth in a kinde of similitude answer to the faith of miracles of old, whereby a man had a particular confidence that God wou'd doe such a miracle by him : so in and by means of prayer, in some things there may be a particular strengthening and assuring the heart, that God will doe such a thing for a man : which I confesse is rare and extra-

Cap. 5. ordinary, as also that immediate testimony concerning our persons is, which many want that goe to heaven. And haply this other concerning the accomplishment of speciall mercies, is much more rare; and but in some busineses; and is a thing which some men are not acquainted with, but yet may be in some cases existent to some mens spirits, as it was to *Dauids* in the thing mentioned.

A caution,
that here-
in a condi-
tional evi-
dence be
not taken
for abso-
lute.

And concerning this also I will also ad a Caution, as about the former. That it doth not alwaies fall out upon all such kinde of evidences made to a mans spirit, and that by God, that the thing prayed for doth come to pass. For these very perswasions stirred up by God may be and are often but *conditional*; though thus immediately made to a mans spirit and are so to be understood, and not

not peremptory, and absolute. Cap. 5
It cannot be imagined that all these should alwayes be of greater absolutenessse and peremptorinessse, then were many of those revelations made by God to the Prophets, wherein he manifested his gracious purpose towards such a man or people, either to vouchsafe them such a mercy, or bring such a judgement; which forewarnings though they were particular and expresse, yet limited and intended with a condition, according to the performance, or not performance of which, it fell out, either the judgement expressly threatned was diverted, or that good thing which was as directly and fully promised; was not bestowed: as it was in the case of *Jonas* threatning the destruction of *Nineveh*; and so in the promise concerning *Ely's* house, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. *I said indeed*

Cap. 5. *deed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me for ever, but now the Lord sayes, It shall not be so : For they had broken the condition which was implied in it ; they had despised the Lord, and them that despise me, sayes God there, I will despise.* In like manner is Gods meaning expressed towards us in such like perswasions wrought in us by prayer, to be understood ; as that such mercies will surely come to pass, but still under a condition of obedience, and performing of those vows, which a man joyned with those his petitions, to move the Lord to grant the things, which if a man fail in, or ceaseth to goe on to believe, it may and doth often come to passe, that things fall out contrary to that perswasion, and then we are apt to question whether it was from God or no ; which it might be,
and

and truly wrought by his Spirit, Cap. 5.
and yet not alwayes absolutely
meant, (that was your mistake
so to take it) but conditionally
only. For in such great requests
of the soul unto *God*, there use to
passe mutuall covenants between
God and us; and Indentures are
drawn and sealed unto by us; that
is, we in prayer, offer and pro-
mise to doe thus and thus, if God
will vouchsafe us such a mercy,
and plead it to God to move him
to bestow it; and God, he there-
upon (it may be) seals a cove-
nant on his part to grant the
thing, and work such an undoubt-
ed perswasion; but if we in that
interim of waiting for that mer-
cy, doe deal falsly in that cove-
nant which we made; and this
even whilest we are yet in depen-
dence upon God for it, whereby
it appears that we would have
done so much more after we
should

Cap. 5. should have received it once; in this case God denies the thing, and yet notwithstanding, that perswasion and evidence was from God that heard the prayer. He said indeed he would doe thus and thus for thee: (as he told *David*, *I would have given thee much more:*) because thou saidst to him, thou wouldst walk thus and thus, or didst vow this or that to him; thou failest in thy word, upon which God uttered his; and thereupon sayes God as to *Ely*, *Now it shall not be so*, and yet God had spoken it afore, and not Satan, nor thine own heart onely.

§ 5.
When
God puts
a restless
importu-
nity into
the heart,
to pray for
a particu-
lar mercy.

4. When God doth put a restless importunity into the heart, maugre all discouragements. So in that *Psal.* 27. 4. *One thing I have desired, and I will seek after it*, that is, as I have sought it, so I will not leave seeking to God for

for it: when God maintains this Cap. 5.
 in the heart, it is a signe he hears
 and will answer: for you know
 the parable, that the *unjust judge*
 heard her for her *importunity*;
 therefore when God puts an im-
 portunity into the heart, he
 means to hear.

Onely this likewise is to be
 added in this, There is a double
 importunity: one out of such
 an inordinate desire to a thing,
 as the heart knows not how to
 be without such a mercy, and so
 continues to ask, but *asketh a-*
miss, and so *receives not*, *Jam. 5.*
 But there is an importunity
 joyned with a subjection to Gods
 will, which when it runs along
 with it, then God hath stirred it
 up, and then look for something
 to come; otherwise you may
 be importunate, as *they seek me*
daily, when yet God heard not,
Esay 58.2.

A double
 importu-
 nity: one
 accepted
 not the
 other.

Cap. 6.

CHAP VI.

Further Observations to be made on the dispositions and carriage of our hearts, after Prayer; until the issue of the thing prayed for.

§ I.
When
God gives
an obedi-
ent heart,
in walk-
ing before
him.

NExt: after thou hast prayed, observe, what God doth towards thee.

As first, how he doth guide thy feet and heart after praying: there is much in that: that which was the Spirit of supplication in a man when he prayed rests upon him as the spirit of obedience in his course; so as that dependance he hath upon God for the mercy he seeks for, is a special motive, and means to keep him fearefull of offending, and diligent in duty; to look to his paths, to walk and behave himself as becomes a suitor, as well

well as to come and pray as a Cap. 6.
sutor. Thus *David*, he walked
by this principle, *Psal. 66. 18. If
I regard iniquity in my heart, God
will not hear me*; that considera-
tion still came in as a curb unto
sinne; and without this a man
provokes God, and so casts him-
self behind-hand again, and by
sinning loseth what ground he
had got by praying. Therefore
David, Psal. 145. 8, 9, 10. when
he was to pray, even as for his
life, (as then he did, it being a
deliverance from his enemies he
sought) he specially prayes
God to direct him and keep him
that he might not sinne against
him; for he knew by sinning
he should enervate and spoil all
his prayers: not onely *hear me
speedily* (says he) but also *Cause
me to know the way wherein I should
walk; to Teach me to doe thy will*;
this he especially prayes for,
and

Cap. 6. and more than for deliverance, for else he knew God would not hear him. Therefore when thou art in treaty with God for any mercy, observe, doth God still after praying keep thee in a more obedient frame of spirit? it is a signe he intends to answer thee; as in like manner, when he keeps thee from using ill means, &c. When he meant to give *David* the Kingdom, he kept him innocent, and his heart tender, that it smote him but for cutting off the lap of *Sauls* garment: he was not so tender after. Therefore in *Psal.* 18. when he was delivered from all his enemies, he sayes, *God dealt with him according to his uprightness: for I kept myself from mine iniquity.* So also *Psal.* 27. 11.

2. When
God gives
a heart to
wait for

2. When God after prayer strengtheneth the heart to wait for the mercy. So *Psal.* 27. ult.
David

David having prayed, says to **Cap. 6.**
his soul, *Wait on the Lord, be of* ^{and expect-}
good courage, and he will strengthen ^{eth mer-}
thy heart. Honest men when
they nourish hopes in one that
is in dependance on them, who
waiteth and is obsequious upon
the hopes he hath of a suite, use
not to deny him : it were disho-
nesty in them to keep a man un-
der hand, and then frustrate his
expectations : Therefore when
God keeps thy soul after pray-
ing in such a dependant frame,
look for some good answer.
And indeed when a man hath
prayed long, in the end he be-
gins to *wait* (as I may so say) *ra-*
ther then pray (though he pray
still) because now he looks God
should perform : before, and at
first he told the Lord he *desired*
it, but now he can with some
boldness tell him, that he *waits*
for it and expects it. The hope of
a godly

Cap. 7. *a godly man and his expectation should make him ashamed if it were not answered, therefore in this case answers use to come.*

Both these two last we have together joyned, Psal. 37. 34. *Wait on the Lord, and keep his wayes, and he shall exalt thee.*

CHAP. VII.

Observations to be made after prayer, upon the issue of what was prayed for : and first, if accomplished, whether as the fruit of prayers, or out of common providence; Helps herein.

WHEN a man hath thus waited, and kept his way, then let him observe the issue and conclusion of what he sought for, how things are cast by God. Now of necessity, one of these two must fall out, that either

either the thing desired is accomplished, or not accomplished: and in either of these he may come to speake out answers to his prayers; for prayer may be answered, though the thing be not done.

I mean to insist severally on these.

i. If the thing thou prayedst for doth come to passe, then what needest thou doubt of an answer, and whether God heard thee or no? For thou beholdest it with thine eyes: and so often it falls out that God doth grant according to the desires of a mans heart; and not onely so, but also *fulfills his counsel* therein, as it is *Psalm 20 4.* that is, fulfils not only his desire, & aim of his prayer, but in that very way, by that very means, which his judgment and counsel pitch upon in his own thoughts. The
§. i. 1
God sometimes answers the prayer fully in the way and manner desired.
desire

Cap. 7. *desire* of the heart may be satisfied, when God gives some other thing, but the *counsel* of the heart is then fulfilled, when a man is answered in that particular, which his own judgement pitcht upon as best for him. For counsel is an act of the understanding, deliberating about means to an end, and directing to choose a particular means tending to an end: so that as *Eliphaſ* says to *Job*, 22. 27. 28. *Thou shalt make thy prayer to God, and he shall hear thee : and decree a thing, and it shall be established to thee, that is, a man is guided to decree and pitch upon such mercies in his prayers, as God makes good in particular : he sayes what he would have, and God performs it : and this priviledge thou shalt have (saies Eliphaſ there) if thou wilt turn to him, and be acquainted with him, and receive*

receive the Law from his mouth : Cap. 7.
thou shalt not erre in praying;
but what thou settest upon to
pray for, shall be accordingly
granted to thee : such a man
shall have the priviledge *Finge-
re sibi fortunam* in a right sennie, to
be his own chooser, and carver
of his own mercies; and as
Christ said, *Be it according to thy
faith*, so God saies sometimes, *Be
according to thy prayers*; and *Eli-
phaZ* speaks of it as of a special
favour; that whereas other
mens prayers are answered ob-
liquely, thine says he shall be
answered directly, which are
more comfortable; as direct
beams are, and have more heat
in them than collateral and ob-
lique. Thus if a man will hear
God and obey him, God will
hear him : for if a man be sub-
ject to *Christs Kingly Office*, his
Prophetical Office shall guide him,
and

Cap. 7. and cause him not to erre in his Petitions; but by an unerring providence and preinstinct infused by his Spirit, God will so guide him, as to ask even that very thing which God intends to give; whereas of himself *he knows not what*, nor how to ask. So David asked long life, and God gave it him, *Psal. 21. 2, 3, 4.* God not only gave him his hearts desire, but the request of his lips, *vers. 2.* Hannah askt a sonne, and God answered her in the very thing she desired, and therefore she called him Samuel, *1 Sam. 1. 20.* Because (saies she) *I askt him of the Lord :* and *vers. 27.* *For this child I prayed, and the Lord (did not give another thing in stead of it, but) hath given me my Petition I asked of him.* So *1 Chro. 4. 10.* Jabez called on God ('tis said) and God granted him the thing he requested. And thus
 God

God often deals with his children. And to this end hath God given us his *Spirit*, and made *Christ Wisdome unto us*, who knows what is good for us, though we doe not. And hath therefore also commanded us to spie out mercies for our selves, and then come to him for them : and to this end hath made such particular promises of particular mercies, which he would have us have an eye unto in our prayers; all which is, because often he means to bestow the very thing we ask.

And yet because, although we have the very things we did ask and desire, such is the jealousie and infidelity of our hearts that we often discern not nor acknowledge that it was our prayers that obtained them from God: but we are apt, when once we have them, either to

Yet our hearts are often jealous whether it be an answer to prayer, or out of common providence.

F look

Cap. 7. look but to things below, and the second causes of them, though before we did earnestly seek them of God, or else still distrustfully to question whether or no it was at our prayers that he granted them, or out of common providence. Thus *Job* in his distemper, *Job* 9. 16. *although I had called, and God had answered me, yet* (saies he) *I would not beleeve that he had hearkned to my voice,* that is, not that he did it in respect to my prayer and request, because he now deals so severely with me, *For he breaketh me with a tempest, ver. 17.* And thus doe our distrustfull hearts, (which are apt to be unsatisfied with all the cleereft pledges of Gods favour, and still to misconstrue and pervert them,) although God doth answer us upon our calling upon him, yet we will not beleeve that

that he hearkned to our prayer. Cap. 7.
in it. Therefore that you may
be further enabled to discern,
how, and when things you pray-
ed for, come in by prayer; I give
you these further directions.

1. When God doth a thing §. 2.
in answer to prayers, he often ^{Directions to} help to discern this,
doth it in such a man-
ner, that his hand may be in a more
than ordinary man-
ner seen in it. There
are few prayers, wherein a man hath
sought God much, but in the
answers of them God discovers
himself much, and turns many
great wheels in the accomplish-
ment of them, and manifests (as
David desires, *Psal. 57. 7*) his
marvellous loving kindness; and
indeed, when God hears prayers
that have been a long while a
making, He shews usually half

Cap. 7. a miracle one way or other, 100

Now God discovers his immediate hand in the answers of our *prayers* many ways.

1. By bringing it to pass through many difficulties.

1. When he carries a thing through many difficulties, when there were a great many crosses and wards in a businessse *prayed* for, the least whereof would have kept the key from turning: when God shall make (as it were) a key on purpose to unlock it; when God plots and contrives all the passages in a businessse thou didst *pray* for, and so accomplish it; This is a signe, it is a fruit of *prayer*, and that *prayer* had been a making that key all that while: So in bringing *David* to the Kingdome; *Ioseph* out of prison; *Mordecai* to honour: and likewise *S. Peter* out of prison, which was done at the *prayers* of the Church, *Acts* 12. He was sleeping between

two

two souldiers : if they had wa- Cap. 7.
ked, he had been discovered :
and he was in chains, but they
fall off, *verse 6. 7.* And the
Keepers stood before the doore,
but they minde him not, *vers. 6.*
and when one watch is past, he
passeth quietly through ano-
ther, *vers. 10.* and when both
those were past, an Iron-gate
flies open of its own accord, *ver.*
10. Now much difficulties
are there in many businesses,
which yet in the end are accom-
plished by prayer: Iron chaines
fall off, Iron-gates, enemies
hearts fly open of their own ac-
cord; and though not in that
miraculous manner, by the
means of an *Angel*, yet no lesse
wonderfull.

Or secondly, when God faci-
litates all means to accomplish
the thing which was *prayed* for,
so as all means doe in view con-

Cap. 7. *Or secondly by facilitating all the means and causing them to conspire to accomplish it.* *spire and combine in it, that thou hast winde and tyde, and a fair day, and all the way paved, or as David sayes, hast sby way made plain before thee; and there falls out a great conjunction and meeting of many circumstances together to effect it, which had influence into it, whereof if any one had been wanting, haply the thing had not been done; when the thing prayed for is thus granted, prayer then hath done it. Thus, when he delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt, which was the accomplishment of their long desires and prayers (their cry came up, the Text saies) how were all things facilitated! they that detained them to themselves, come, and intreat them to*

Exod. 12. *goe out, yea, are urgent, sayes the*
 31 33.35 *Text; and that at midnight: nay, hire them to goe out, with their eare-rings; and Pharaoh himself then*

then parts lovingly and fairly Cap. 7.
 with them, and desires their pray-
 ers, *blesse me also*. Yea to shew ver. 32.
 there was no resistance, the Text
 sayes, *a dog did not move his*
tongue : The brute creatures did
 not disturb them, though at mid-
 night, when those Creatures use
 to be most obstreperous through
 noises.

3. When he doth it suddenly, ^{3. By}
 and accomplisheth the thing ^{bringing}
 thou hast long *prayed* for, ere thou ^{it to pass}
 art aware of it : as the return ^{suddenly}
 of the Captivity of *Babylon*, which ^{and unex-}
 was the conclusion of many pray- ^{pectedly.}
 ers, was done in a trice, *they were*
as men in a dream, Psalm 126. 1.
 They could scarce believe it was
 so, when it was done, it was be-
 cause they had *sown many prayers*
 which *came up* on the sudden,
 ver. 5. 6. So *Peter*, he was fast a-
 sleep, and did not so much as
 dream of deliverance, So *Josephs*

Cap. 7. delivery out of prison, and advancement to be the greatest man in the Kingdome, the suddenness of it shewed it was Gods remembering of him, and hearing his prayers.

4. By doing above what was desired with addition of other mercies.

4. When God grants the thing with an overplus, above what we did ask, and casteth many other mercies in together with that which we long prayed for; this also may be a signe God did hear our prayers in it: for when he doth hear indeed, he useth to doe above what we did ask or think, thereby the more to overcome the heart. So *David* asked *long life*, and he gave him more than he asked, *Psal. 21. 2, 3, 4, 5.* So *Solomon* he asked but *wisdom*, and he gave him more than he asked, *peace riches, honour*, and all with it, *1 King. 3. 12, 13.* *Hannah* she asked but one male child, *1 Sam. 1. 10.* but God gave her three

three sons more and two daughters, *Chap. 2. 21.* When prayers are answered, usually mercies come thick, they come tumbling in; the thing we prayed for comes not alone; as when sinnes are punished, then miseries also they come like armies in troops upon us: as temptations likewise come together, and we fall into many of *Jam. 1. 2.* them at once, as *S. James* speaks: Thus doe mercies also.

5. When the thing is granted by prayers, there is often some particular circumstance of providence concurrent with it, which is a token for good, and seal-eth to us that it is from God; such often as a man himself takes notice of, and which others take notice of also. *Show me a token for good,* sayes *David*, *Plal. 86. 17.* that others may see it and be ashamed: and such tokens doth God often make small circumstances to be.

s. By adding some special circumstance as a token of Gods special hand in it.

Cap. 7. Things small in themselves, may be *magna indicia*, great signes and tokens : for example, *Moses* and *Aaron*, and the *Israelites*, had long cryed to God for the deliverance of his people, and laid up many prayers; *their cry come up* as was said; and when God doth deliver them, what tokens were there of good? and of Gods hand indit; and of his answer to their prayers? The Text notes, (as was observed before) *that a dog did not bark at their going out* *Exod, 11. 7.* which was a small circumstance, but it was *magnum indicium*, and so intended by God; for the Text adds, *That ye may know that God puts a difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians.* This was a token of Gods hand, to over-rule the tongues of rude brute creatures, that use to stirre at such unusuall noises, and at travellers especially

ly in the night. So when *Isaac* Cap. 7.
and *Abraham*, and his servant al-
so had prayed for a Wife for *Isa-*
ac, see by what a token God
shewed he had heard their pray-
ers, *Rebekkah* was the first that
came out to the servant sent to
bring a wife for him: and it she
be the woman appointed for *Isa-*
ac, (sayes the servant) *Let her of-* Gen 24.
fer me drink, and my Camels also: 13. 14.
this was a small thing in appea-
rance, but a great *indicium* of
Gods hand in it, and therefore
the servant bowed at it, and wor-
shipped: and the sight in it self
was such, as argued a good na-
ture in her, and a kinde courteous
disposition, which therefore (it
may be) he singled out, as a to-
ken of a meet wife, as a thing e-
specially to be looked at in the
marriage choice.

Again, the consideration of §. 3.
the time, wherein the things we
have

Cap. 7. have asked, are granted, may
 Observation from the time wherein the thing prayed for is accomplished, as,

much help us to discern, whether it be in answer to our prayers.

For God, who doth all things in *weight and measure*, shews his *wisdom* and *love*, as much in the *season*, as in giving the thing it self.

G O D considereth all times of thy life, and still chooseth the best and fittest to answer thy prayers in, *In an acceptable time have I heard thee.* So *Esay 49. 8.*

As *David* (in like manner sayes) he prayed, *in an acceptable time,* *Psal. 69. 13.* So accordingly God answers in the best and most acceptable time to us; for *he waits to be gracious, for he is a God of judgement,* *Esay 30. 18.* that is, He is a wise God that knows the fittest times and seasons, wherein to shew kindnesse, and to deal forth his favours, in.

I.
 Sometime
 the the

As first; it may be, that at that very time when thou hast been most

most instant and earnest, yea e- Cap. 7.
 ven whilest thou art a praying, thing is
 or presently after, the thing is accom-
 done and accomplisht. To this plisht a-
 purpose is that of *Esay* 65. 24. bout the
 That as sometimes *he heares be-* time where-
fore they call, (which argues much in we are
 love to give mercies unsought) most in-
 so also *whilest they are speaking,* stant in
will hear, and grant the thing, prayer.
 which argues no less love; and
 he culls out that time on purpose,
 that they might rest assured it
 was in answer to their prayer.
 Thus to assure *H. zekiah* his prai-
 er was heard, God sent the Pre-
 phet in unto him whilest he was
 a praying and weeping, with his
 head turned towards the wall. So
Isaac going out to pray in the
 field, meets his *Rebekkah* then a Gen: 24.
 coming; that blessing of a good 63.
 Wife, being surely the great re-
 quest temporall he was then in
 Treaty with God for: for this
Rebekkah

Cap. 7. *Rebekkah* was the fruit of many prayers. So when *St. Peter* was in prison, the Church being gathered together to pray for him, *St. Peter* comes and knocks at the same hour, *Acts 12.* from the 12. verse to the 18. So as it often falls out herein, as to the Ruler in the Gospel, *John 4. 52.* who inquiring diligently, found that the same hour that *Christ* had said to him, *Thy son liveth, his son recovered, and so he beleaved, and his whole household:* So also here, that sometimes the thing is done, or the news of it comes the same hour or soon after, wherein a man was praying about it, and haply then when the heart was most stirred about it, more than at any time else: this is a signe it was an answer of prayers, and may help to confirm a mans faith in it, as that also did his.

2. When granted in the fittest time.

Or secondly, when it is the most

most acceptable and every way Cap. 7.
 the fittest time to have the thing
 granted. At that time ¹ when
 thou hadst most need, and when
 thy heart was most fit for it. For
 in answering prayers, God aims
 especially at two things: ¹ To
 shew his mercy, that a man might
 magnifie and exalt that: And ²
 To have the heart satisfied and fil-
 led with joy and contentment in
 his answer, and the thing made
 sweet, and a mercy indeed to
 him: in briefe, that his goodness
 might be delighted in, and his
 mercy exalted. And for these two
 purposes he culls out such times,
 when we have most need; and
 also when our hearts are most
 subdued, and our lusts mortified:
 For then we are fittest to relish
 his goodness alone, and not to be
 drawn away with the carnall
 sweetness that is in the thing.
 The one you have exprest, *Esay*

The fittest
 time
 known
 two waies;

Cap. 7. 30. 18. *He waits to be gracious to have his mercy exalted.* The second intimated, James 5. *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, to consume upon your lusts.* Such prayers, whilst the heart is in this temper, the Lord denies, or defers in mercy till the heart be weaned.

1. When
we have
most need.

For the first of these: As, suppose thou didst pray long for assurance of salvation, and joy in the holy Ghost, and when thou hadst most need of it, either when *thy spirit would have failed without it, as Esay 57. 16.* Or against some great affliction approaching, or some great encounter with the world for the Name of Christ, then God filled thy heart with it, &c. that was the fittest time; now hath God heard thy prayer. As St. Peter he was in Prison, and had been so for many daies, as appears by the fourth
and

and fifth verses, *Acts* 12. God Cap. 7.
 could have delivered him at any
 time, while the Church prayed
 for him, *verse* 5. But God kept
 him in on purpose, till that ve-
 ry night, when in the next mor-
 ning *Herod* meant to bring him
 forth to execution, and then
 God delivered him at the pray-
 ers of the Church; then was the
 most fit time; As the *Psalmist*
 sayes, *The full time to have mercy* *Psalm* 102.
on him was come. And then to
 receive an answer, is a sign God
 did it out of special love, which
 love he *would have exalted by thee,*
 as *Esay*, 30. 18.

It 2. when thy heart was *most*
 fit for the mercy, it was gran-
 ted, then art thou also heard in
 an acceptable time: For God
 doth not withhold mercies
 from those that are his, out of
 want of love; neither so much
 for what is past, as for the pre-
 sent

1. When
 the heart
 was best
 prepared
 to receive
 it, and
 most wea-
 ned from
 it.

Cap. 7. sent evil disposition of their hearts, whereby they are unfit to receive them : and in this sense likewise may that be understood, that God *prepareth the heart*; and *heareth the Prayer*, *Psal. 10. 17.*

As first, when thy heart is most weaned from that temporal mercy (supposing it such) granted thee upon seeking of it: So *David*, when he had the Kingdome in possession given him; then when he was as a *weaned childe*, and had his high thoughts) which haply at the first news of it had risen in his minde) purged out, *Psal. 131. 2. I have no high thoughts, &c.* sayes he then; Thus, when thy heart had let all carnal ends goe, and had betaken it self alone to God, for thy portion to be had alone out of him, then the thing prayed for comes to passe :

Cap. 7.
passe : this was the fittest sea-
son.

But you will be ready to say, *Obj.*
To have a thing when my heart
is taken off from it, and even
contented not to have it, makes
it to be as no mercy : for where
there is no desire, there is no re-
joycing.

If thy desire be taken off the *Ans.*
thing, then thou wilt rejoyce
the more in God now; and
though the thing of it self
should now give thee lesse satis-
faction, yet God by the thing
will give thee more, and he will
make it up, for thou wilt relish
his love and sweetnesse in it
now, which is *better than life*,
and therefore much better than
that thing enjoyed; and indeed
the violence of the desire before
would have made it lesse sweet,
for the thing alone would not
have filled and contented that
desire,

Cap. 7. desire, when it was an inordinate lust, and so thou wouldest have been vexed with it; rather than satisfied, and found a greater vanity in it : but now when it is become a subordinate desire unto God, that the desire is down, and the heart quieted and contented with God in the thing : the heart sayes as she said, *I have enough*. So 2. likewise thou maist have an affliction thou prayedst long against, taken off then, when thy heart was most willing to accept thy punishment (as *Moses's* phrase is,) as to submit to God in it.

Lev. 16.
41.

§ 4.
A third sort of observations, from the answerable proportion between Gods dealing in the

A third thing you are to observe concerning the accomplishment of the thing prayed for, whereby you may discern whether granted in answer to prayers, is, when thou seest God in his dealings with thee, and answering of thee, to deal in

in a kinde of proportion with *Cap. 7.*
thy manner of praying and ^{accom-}
seeking of him, and of walking ^{plishment}
with him whilest thou wert de- ^{of it, and}
pendant on him, for such or ^{our pray-}
such a mercy. And as you may
see a proportion between sinnes
and punishments, which are the
rewards of them; that you can
say, such a sin brought forth
this affliction, it is so like the
Father: so you might see the
like proportion between your
prayers, and your walking with
God, and Gods answers to you,
and his dealings with you. So
did *David, Psal. 18. 24. Accord-*
ing to the cleannesse of my hands
hath he recompensed me, &c. His
speech notes some similitude or
likenesse: as for example, The
more by-ends or carnal desires
you had in praying, and the
more you mingled of these with
your holy desires, and the more
want

Cap. 7. want of zeal, fervency, &c. were found in your prayers, the more you shall (it may be) find of bitterneſſe mingled with the mercy, when it is granted; and ſo much imperfection, and want of comfort in it: ſo ſayes *David* in the ſame *Pſ. v. 25, 26.* *With the pure thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf pure,* Pure prayers have pure bleſſings, & *è contra: With the froward thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf froward:* and again, as you in praying ſometimes ſlackened and grew cold, ſo you might ſee the buſineſſe in like manner to cool, and caſt backward: as when *Moses hands were down, Amaleck prevailed;* but when they were lifted up, *Israel* had the better, *Exod. 17. 12.* God let him ſee a proportion, which argued his prayer was the means of prevailing. A man finds in praying, that his ſuit ſometimes ſticks, and

and goes not as he expected, Cap. 7.
this is because he gives not so
good a fee as he was wont, and
doth not ply *God*, and sollicite
him; but on the contrary, when
he was stirred up to pray, then
still he found things to goe
well: by this a man may cleerly
see, that it was the prayer which
God did hear and regarded.
Thus likewise when a man sees
hills and dales in a businesse, fair
hopes often, and then all dasht
again, and the thing in the end
brought to passe, let him look
back upon his prayers: didst
not thou in like manner just thus
deal with God? When thou
hadst prayed earnestly, and
thought thou hadst even caried
it, then dash all again, by inter-
posing some sin, and thus again
and again? Herein God would
have you observe a proportion;
and it may help you to discern
how,

Cap. 8. how, and when they are answered and obtained by prayer; because God deals thus with you therein in such a proportion to your prayers.

CHAP. VIII.

Seven Observations more, from the effects which the accomplishment of the mercy hath upon the heart, &c.

§. 1.
If the thing obtained draws the heart nearer to God and to joyce in his favor in it, more than in the thing.

Fourthly, thou mayest discern whether they be in answer to thy prayers, by the effects upon thy heart.

As 1. If the thing that is granted upon thy prayers, draw thy heart more neer to God, it is then certain, that it was granted as an answer to thy prayers. Things granted out of ordinary providence onely, doe encrease our lusts and are snares to us: as

Saul

Saul gave David his daughter Cap. 8.
daughter Michol to be a snare to
him : So *their full tables are made* Ps. 69. 22.
snare : so God gave the *Israelites*
their will, the things they desi-
red, but withall gave them up to
their lusts, Psal. 106. 15. he gave
them their requests, but sent
leannesse into their souls ; the
Quailes might fat some of their
bodies that survived, yet their
souls grew lean : there was a
curse upon their Spirits : this
new delicate food made their
bodies more lustfull, they *did* Exo. 32. 6.
eat and drink, and rose up to play.
But things obtained by prayer
are sanctified to us, for every
thing is sanctified by prayer, so as 1 Tim 4. 5
it shall not insnare nor intangle
our hearts : a thing obtained
by prayer, as it came from God,
so a man will return it to God,
and use it for his glory : So
Hannah having obtained Samuel
G by

Cap. 8. by prayer, he returns him unto God, 1 Sam. 1. 27, 28. For this child I prayed, and God gave me my petition, and therefore also I have sent him to the Lord as long as he liveth. If therefore thou findest this his dealing with thee, in answering thee, to be a kindly motive to cause thee to mourn for sin, and to be as a restraint against sin, it is a sign it was the fruit of prayer. Thus it wrought with David, Psal. 6. 8. Away from me ye that work iniquity. God hath heard the voice of my weeping.

Also if thou rejoicest in God, more than in the thing obtained: so Hannah begins her song when she bleffeth God for her child; My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, &c. 1 Sam. 2. 10. She rejoiceth not so much in the gift as in the giver; and his favour more in this, that her prayer was

was answered, than in the thing Cap. 8.
obtained : this is a sign of ha-
ving obtained the mercy
through prayers, when it is
thus sanctified unto a mans spi-
rit.

2. Prayers answered will in- § 2.
large thy heart with thankful- Prayer
answered
enlargeth
the heart
with
thankful-
nesse.
nesse, and thus usually they
doe; self-love makes us more
forward, to pray, than to give
thanks; for nature is all of the
craving and taking hand; but
where grace is, there will be
no eminent mercy gotten with
much struggling, but there will
be a continued particular thank-
full remembrance of it a long
while after, with much enlarge-
ment : and *As prayer abounded,*
so will thanksgiving abound also.
Hannah she makes a song, 1 Sam:
1. 2. Great blessings that are
wonne with prayer, are worne
with thankfulness : such a man

Cap. 8. will not aske new, but he will withall give thanks for old. Thankfulnesse, of all duties proceeds from pure grace, therefore if the spirit stirs thee unto it, it is a sign he made the prayer; *What thanks shall I render to God, for the joy I have in you* saith *Saint Paul*, 1 *Thess.* 3. 9. 10? So in all his other Epistles, all those he writs to, as he prays for them, so he tells them, he gives thanks for them, and for their graces which he had prayed for. And if answering prayers for others, makes *Saint Paul* so thankfull, what when for himself? Prayer and thanks, are like the double motion of the lungs, the ayr that is sucked in by prayer, is breathed fourth again by thanks: Is thy heart a fresh enlarged, as to mourn for past sins long since committed, so in like manner, to give thanks for

for mercies won with long prayers, and this for a long while after, it is a signe that they were obtained by prayer. Cap. 8.

3 If the mercy obtained § 3.
doth encourage thee to goe to God another time, to pray again the more confidently and fervently, it is a sign thou hast got the former that way: For the *Holy Ghost* having once shewed thee this way of procuring mercy, hence it is, thou art thus ready to take the same course another time, *Psal. 116. 2.* *The Lord hath heard me, and I will call on him as long as I live.* I know (sayes he) now what course to take if I be in any want, even to call upon him; and he calls upon others to doe so too.

4. When God having heard §.4.
thy prayers upon solemne vows made by thee, thy heart is made
G 3

It this encourage thee to goe to God again.

It makes a man careful to per-

Cap. 8. made carefull to pay those
form his vows which thou didst make in
vows made the time of thy suing to God
in prayer, for that mercy, this may be an
to obtain it. argument to thee, the thing be-
ing granted, that thy prayer
was heard. For first, it argueth,
that thy heart it self doth se-
cretly make such an account,
that upon them God did grant
the thing, and thou do st there-
for make conscience to return
all again to God in service, as
the condition of thy Indentures
made with him; and as a ho-
mage due, and an acknowledg-
ment for ever, that such a mer-
cy was won by prayer; and by
this preservest the memory of
the receipt of that mercy: vows
being of the nature of homage:
and secondly, in this also it is an
evidence that the thing was ob-
tained by prayer, in that God
calls for those vows from thee,
by

by his Spirit in thy heart, and Cap. 8.

stirres thee up to perform them; it argues that in relation to thy prayers answered, he takes them as dues from thee, that having dispatcht thy suit, He now calls for what was agreed to be given him when it should be performed. And thirdly, in that also he doth accept the payment of these thy vows of thee, he acknowledgeth that those vows and prayers were heard: for as *Manoah* said in another case, *If he meant to have destroyed us, he would not have accepted a sacrifice*: so in this case it may be said, if God had not heard thy prayers, he would not have accepted thy vows after thy praying. Thus *David*, *Psal. 66. 13, 14. I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in my trouble; the*

-would

G 4

reason

Cap. 8. reason follows, verse 17. 19. Because that *Verily God hath heard me, when I cryed to him :* and so *Eliphaz*, in *Job* doth connect and hang these together, *Job 22. 17. Thou shalt make thy prayer to him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows :* This which he speaks of paying his vows, was not only as it was to be his duty, but also as a consequent that would follow the other, that when his prayers shou'd be heard, he thereupon would perform his vows : for his scope is to move *Job* to turn to God shewing what benefit would accrue to him by it, and amongst others this : The hearing his prayers, and performing his vows.

§ 5.
If a man
sees by
faith, and
acknow-
ledgeth
Gods sole
hand in
the accom-
plishment.

5. When thou art enabled by faith, to see cleerly *Gods* hand shewed forth in the effecting of that mercy over and above the power of second causes, and to acknow-

acknowledge it to his glory : for **Cap. 8.**
the truth is, one main cavilling
reason in our blind hearts, where-
by we are usually hindred and
put by from apprehending our
prayers to be answered, when
yet the thing is done, we shall
finde to be, that our eyes are ter-
minated and bound in second
causes, and not raised to see Gods
hand in the thing : therefore on
the contrary, when God inableth
thee to see that he hath done
thee this kindness; so as thy
minde is clear in it, this is a fruit
of his hearing thy prayers : And
this you will usually finde to be
true, that *so much faith and de-
pendance as you had upon God in
prayer for the obtaining of a mer-
cy, so much faith and acknowledg-
ment you will have in the accom-
plishment of it.* Parallel with this
rule, that other, which in another
case is usually given, that in per-

Cap. 8. formance of duties, so much as the soul did goe out of it self to God, for strength to perform them, so much when they are performed, will the heart acknowledge Gods assistance and be humbled: And this is a signe of prayer being heard upon this ground, because Gods end of hearing prayer is, that we *might glorifie him*. So Psal 50. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me*. Therefore when the heart hath prayed much for a mercy, with dependance before the obtaining of it, and then is enabled to exalt God when it is obtained, it is a signe that God did it in relation to those prayers. For there is that connexion made between these, as between the cause and the effect, *I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorifie me*. David, when he was delivered out

out of all his troubles (as when *Cap. 8.*
he made that 18. Psalm, he was,
as appears by the title of it) then
at the 6. verse, he relates how
he had prayed and how he was
heard; and see thereupon how
his heart was enlarged to ac-
knowledge God alone to have
done all, in the rest of that Psalm;
so from the 27. and also from the
31. verse. When we see Angels
from God beyond the power of
second causes descending, it is
a signe, that prayers, as Angels,
first ascended, and obtained that
mercy. Thus also the Church,
Esay 26. having obtained those
deliverances by prayer, ver. 17.
(for which there she makes that
song by way of thankfulness) she
ascribes all unto God ver. 12.
*Thou hast wrought all our works for
us, and ver. 18. Verily we have
not wrought any deliverance in the
earth.*

6. When

Cap. 8. 6. When with the mercy there
 §. 6. commeth the assurance of Gods
 With the love, and evidence of his favour;
 mercy, when God sends not a bare token
 sometimes only, but a letter also with it, to
 especiall bear witness of his love, in which
 evidence the token is wrapt. I need not
 comes in, make that a signe, for when this
 that it is comes with a mercy, it carries
 obtained its own evidence, you will then
 by prayer. know well enough that it is the
 fruit of prayer.

§. 7. 7. Lastly, it will be evident
 By the event, things obtained by
 things obtained by prayer have few thorns in them,
 vent prayer, curse is taken out, but what
 things obtained by prayer, comes but by ordinary provi-
 prove real dence, comes as it were up of it
 and stable self alone, and like the earth un-
 mercies. tilled, is full of thorns and briers,
 and many vexations: The rea-
 son is, for what comes in by prai-
 er comes as a blessing, and *so no
 sorrow is added to it*; and also be-
 cause prayer killeth those inordi-
 nate

nate lusts, which is the cause of Cap. 8.
that vanity and vexation which is
in the things enjoyed. *But when
the blessing of God maketh rich, he
addeth no sorrow with it, Prov. 10.
22.* Things long deferred, at last
obtained by prayer, prove most
comfortable, and in a settled man-
ner such; they prove standing
and stable blessings; and what
trouble the heart was put to in
the deferring, it is recompenced
by the more settled constant im-
mixt sweetness in the enjoying;
prayer having long perfumed it,
and the thing being steeped
therein, it provs exceeding plea-
sant. So *Prov. 13. 12. Hope de-
ferred makes the heart sick, but
when the desire comes it is a tree of
life,* and heals that sickness, and
abundantly comforts the heart.
Thus *Isaac found Rebekkah, a
great blessing, and a comfortable
wife to him, Gen. 24. ult.* Such
a com-

Cap. 8. a comfort also was *Isaac* to *Abraham*, *Gen. 17, 18, 19* A son indeed, a son of laughter, as his name signifies : and such was *Samuel* to *Hannah*, she had not only a son of him, but a good son, a blessed son, a Prophet, and the Judge of the people of God : whereas *Jacob* getting the blessing, but without prayer, how embittered was it to him (though a blessing to him in the event) by twenty years banishment from his mothers house ? When *Israel* themselves set up a King, but not by me, as God sayes, what a punishment was he to them ? given in wrath, and taken away in anger, *Hos. 13. 11.*

C H A P.

Cap 9.

CHAP. IX.

Considerations *to quiet the heart,*
& to help it to discern an answer
to, and acceptation of the prayer,
 when the thing is not accom-
 plisht.

BUT now the next and more § 1.
 difficult question is, *When* The thing
the thing is not granted, how shall prayed for
 we then discern and know, that is not al-
 ways
 God doth notwithstanding hear granted,
 when yet
 the prayer
 is heard.

Concerning which, I must
 premise this, that it is true, that
 alwayes the very thing it self de-
 sired is not granted, when yet
 the prayer is heard. Christ pray-
 ed, *the cup might passe from him,*
 which though some interpret
 the word *passing*, for the short
 continuance of the brunt, and that
 therefore in that respect he was
 heard directly in what he asked :
 yet

Cap. 9. yet if so, why was that clause *if it be possible*, added? that argues his petition was for a total removal, yet with subjection to Gods will; for he knew there was no great impossibility in a short removal of it: nay, it was impossible but that it should passe, *Act. 2. 24.* But howsoever, it is plain in *Moses*, about his going into *Canaan*: *Deut. 3. 26.* *I besought the Lord*, saies he, *ver. 23. and he was angry with me and would not heare me, ver. 26.* Likewise ere I come to resolve the case, an objection is also to be removed, which is.

That if the Spirit of God doth make every faithfull prayer in us, as *Rom. 8. 26.* it is said he doth; we know not what to pray for, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, &c. and he searcheth the deep things of God, as it is said, *1 Cor. 2.* that therefore he knowing that
God

God will not grant such a thing, Cap. 9.
 you may think that he should
 not stir up the heart to pray for
 that which God means to deny,
 but alwayes guide the heart a-
 right, and not let us erre or
 misse in the things we pray for.
 To this in brief, by way of an-
 swer:

1. The Spirit makes not pray-
 ers in us, alwayes according to
 what Gods secret will and fore-
 knowledge is, but according to
 his revealed will to us, both in
 his word, and in his providence,
 as things therein are presented
 to us, and doe lie before our
 view, and so not alwaies accor-
 ding to what he means to doe,
 but according to what it is our
 duty to pray most for: for he
 concurs to assist us to pray, as he
 doth in *preaching* or using other
 such like means and Ordinan-
 ces, wherein though the Spirit
 knows

An objec-
 tion an-
 swered:
 That
 though
 the Spirit
 knows
 Gods mind
 and teach-
 eth us what
 to pray
 for, yet the
 thing
 prayed for
 may not
 be granted

Cap. 9. knows whom God means to convert, whom not, yet he assists us Ministers in our spirits ofentimes as much to *preach* to those he means not to convert, as to those he means to convert: He dealing with us therein according to what is our duty, not according to what is his decree.

Again, secondly, that phrase helps to answer this, when he is said to *help our infirmities*, and therefore not according to his own vast knowledge, *both* he frame our *prayers*, but so, as he applies his assistance to our infirm, weak, and narrow apprehensions: and stirs up desires in us to such things, as according to our knowledge we are in duty to conceive, and which by all we can see, by what is afore us revealed in his providence, we think to be most for our good and his glory; and God accepts

accepts such desires as from us, Cap. 9. but yet doth for us according to the largeness of his own love.

And so now to come to the case propounded, and therein unto helps to pacifie, and direct the heart about those prayers at which the things are not granted.

§. 2.
A mistake to pray absolutely for such blessings as are not absolutely promised.

And first, how diddest thou frame thy prayer for that thing which is denyed thee? Didst thou pray for it absolutely, and peremptorily, as simply best for thee? thou must not then think much, if such a prayer be denyed, for therein thou wentest beyond thy commission: but if thou didst pray for it conditionally, and with an [if] as Christ did, *if it be possible*, (which instance is a strong ground for such kinde of prayers) and, *not my will, but thy will be done*, so, as thou didst referre it unto, and trust

Cap. 9. trust Gods judgement in the thing, and not thine own, onely didst put him in minde as thy duty was, of what was represented to thee as best for thee in view, and so left it to him to cast, and didst referre it to his will and wisdom: Then thy prayer may be most fully answered and heard, and yet the thing denyed, and thou art to interpret, and take Gods meaning and minde revealed in the event in the best sense which way soever it falls: for otherwise, Christ had not been heard when yet the Text sayes, *He was heard in all he feared*, Hebr. 5. vers. 7.

§. 3.
There may be a reservation in the denial, for some greater mercy.

2. Observe, if there were not a reservation in that denial, for some greater and further mercy, whereof that denial was the foundation. Thus oftentimes some great crosse is prevented, by

by the denial of a thing, which Cap. 9.
we were urgent for : it we had
had many of our desires, we had
been undone : So it was a mer-
cy to *David*, that his child was
taken away, for whose life he
was yet so earnest, who would
have been but a living monu-
ment of his shame. It was also
a mercy to *David*, that *Absolom*
was taken away, (whom surely
he *prayed* much for, for he loved
him much) who if he had lived,
might have been the ruine of
him and his house. As a wick-
ed mans deliverance and the
granting his request layeth a
foundation, and is a reservation
of him to a worse Judgement :
So the denial of a godly mans
prayer is for his greater good, and
is laid as a foundation of a great-
er mercy. ² And again, often-
times the very denial breaks a
mans heart, and brings him nec-
rer

Cap. 9. rer to God, puts him upon searching into his wayes, and estate and in his *prayers* to see what should be amasse therein, which alone is a great mercy; and better than the thing, seeing by the losse of that one thing, he learns how to *pray* better, and so to obtain a hundred better things afterwards. Christ desired *the cup might pass*, it did not, and that was the foundation of our salvation, and the way to His glory, He being to passe through that suffering into His glory. The woman that had the bloody issue, though she used many means, and haply *prayers* among the rest, and all in vain, yet none took effect, that in the end she might come to *Christ*, and have both body and soul healed at once.

§ 4.
There
may be a

3. Observe if there be not a *transmutation* and a *translation* or turning

turning of the thing desired, in- Cap. 9.
to some other great blessing of transmuta-
the same kinde : for God (all tion of the
whose wayes are mercy and truth thing de-
to His people) doth improve, nied, into
husband, and lay out the preci- some other
ous stocks of their prayers, to blessing
the best advantage in things, that is bet-
whereby the greatest returns ter of the
and gains may accrue : as old same kind,
Jacob laid not his Hand of bles-
sing as *Joseph* wou'd have guid-
ed them, but laid the right hand
upon the younger Sonne, whom
Joseph did set at his left : So of-
ten doth God take off his hand
of blessing from the thing we
prayed for, and layes and disco-
vers it in another more for our
good : and as God giving *Isaac*
the power and priviledge to
bless a son, though *Isaac* he in-
tended it for *Esau*, yet God un-
beknown to him transmitted it
to *Jacob*, yet so, as the blessing
was

Cap. 9. was not lost : Thus it is in our prayers for a blessing both upon our selves and others. There is often a *transmutation*, never a *frustration* of them : which may as truly and directly be called an answer to the *prayer* : As if a Factor beyond Sea, when the owner sends for such and such commodities supposing them more vendible and advantageous, but the Factor knowing the state of things, and the prices, sends him over in stead of them, such as shal sell better, and bring in more profit, may be said to answer his letters, and that better, than if he had sent those very commodities he writ for; Thus *Abrahams* prayers for *Ishmael* were turned for *Isaac*; *Dauids* for the Child, to *Solomon*.

§. I. 4. Observe if in the end God doth not answer thee still according

cording to the *ground* of thy Cap. 9.
 prayer : that is, see if that holy God an-
 end, intention, and affection, swers to
 which thou hadst in prayer, be the ground
 not in the end fully satisfied, of our
 though not in the thing thou prayers.
 didst desire; for God answers
secundum cardinem, according to
 the hinge which the prayer
 turns upon. As when a Gene-
 ral is sent out with an Army by
 a King or State, who give him
 many a particular directions,
 how to order and dispose and
 manage the war, although in
 many particulars that fall out,
 wherein they could not foresee
 to give so punctual and particu-
 lar directions, he swerve from
 the directions, yet if he keeps to
 the intent of their Commission,
 and doth what is most advanta-
 gious for their ends, he may be
 said to keep to his Commission.
 For as they say of the Law,

Cap. 9. *Mens Legu est Lex*, the minde of the Law is the Law, not the bare words it is printed in : so the meaning of the Spirit is the prayer, Rom. 8. 27. and not simply the things desired, wherein we expresse those our desires ; and still the meaning, the intent, the ground of our prayers shall be answered. To open this, the main ends and meanings of our hearts in our requests are Gods glory, the Churches good, and our own particular comfort and happinesse : we can desire but comfort, and a man looketh out and spieth out such a particular mercie, which he thinketh tends much to Gods glory, and his happinesse, and yet that thing is denied ; yet notwithstanding God will answer him according to the meaning of his prayers, his Glory shall certainly be advanced, even for that prayer of his

his, some other way, and his Cap. 9.
comfort made up, which is the
common desire of all mankind;
and thou canst have but com-
fort: let the thing be what it will
that conveighs it to thee; and
God will take order that that
comfort thy soul desired, thou
shalt have come in one way or
other, which when it doth, thou
canst not but say thy prayers
are heard. For as God fulfils
his promises, so he hears pray-
ers, there is the same reason of
both: Now God hath promi-
sed, *He that leaves Father and
Mother, shall have an hundred fold:*
not in *specie*, as we say, in *kinde*,
this cannot alwaies be fulfilled;
for an hundred Fathers he can-
not have. God fulfils it not
therefore alwayes in the same
kinde, but in some other things,
which shall be more than an
hundred Fathers would be.

Cap. 9. *Moses* he *prayer* he might goe into *Canaan*; God answers the ground of his *prayer*, though not in the matter in it expressed and desired, and that both for *Moses* his comfort and his own glory; for he takes him up to heaven, the true *Canaan*, whereof that *Canaan* was but a type, and he appoints *Joshua* a fresh and a young man, coming on in the world, and one whom *Moses* himself had tutored and brought up, and was his pupil, servant, and attendant, *Num.* 6. 11. 28. and this was more for Gods glory; for *Joshua* was therein to be the type of Christ leading us to heaven, which the Law (of which *Moses* was the type could not bring us unto by reason of the weaknes of it; and he being young did it better: and it was not so much also for Gods glory, that one man should doe all; and
whereas

whereas *Moses* desired to have the Cap. 9.
honour of it, in that his servant
that attended him, and had been
brought up by him, and had all
from him, that he was the man
should doe it, was well nigh as
great an honour to *Moses*, as if
he had been the leader himself.
And so *David* when he desired
to build the Temple and an
house to God, for the like rea-
sons God denied it, but yet ho-
noured him to prepare the ma-
terials, and to draw the pattern,
as also in that his sonne did it,
who was therein also the like
type of Christ, being a *Prince of*
peace, but *David* a man of blood
and warre, and likewise God
accepted this of *David*, as if he
had built it, and will recom-
pence him as much.

Observe, it in the thing § 7.
which thou hast prayed much God when
about, though it be denied thee, he denies,
yet some-

Cap. 9. yet if God doth not endeavor
times to give thee (as I may so speak)
yeelds far all satisfaction that may be, even
in it to as if he were tender of denying
give satisfaction to thee; and therefore doth much
his child. in it for thy prayers sake, though
the conclusion proves otherwise
as being against some other purpose
of his, for some other ends;
as when he denied *Moses* to goe
into the Land of *Canaan*, he did
it with much respect (as I may
so speak with reverence) to *Moses*:
he yeelded as far as might
be, for he let him lead them, till
he should come to the very borders;
and he let him see that good Land,
carrying him up to an hill, and (as it is
thought) by a miracle enabled his sight
to view the whole Land; and the man
he chose to perform this work, was
his servant, which was a great honour
to *Moses*, that one brought up by him
should succeed

Cap. 9.
succeed him. So when *Abraham* prayed for *Ishmael*, *Oh let Ishmael live in thy sight*, Gen 17. 18. God went as far in granting his request as might be; for, says, he vers. 20. *I have heard thee, and I have blessed him, and I will make him fruitfull, and multiply him exceedingly, and he shall beget twelve Princes; but my covenant I will establish with Isaac.* So likewise, when in casting that thing, thou didst seek at his hands, he shews an extraordinary hand in turning it; it is a signe he had a respect to thee, that he would vouchsafe to discover his hand so much in it; let the thing fall which way it will, if Gods hand appeare much in it, thou mayest comfortably conclude, that there is some great thing in it, and that prayer wrought that miracle in it to dispose it so; and that there is
H 4 some

Cap. 9. some great reason why he denies thee, and a great respect had to thy prayers, in that he is pleased to discover so extraordinary a providence about it.

§. 7. Lastly, look into the eff. & of that denial upon thine own heart; as,

Observe the effects that denials have upon the heart. As first, if a man doth acknowledge God righteous in it, &c.

1. If thy heart be enlarged to acknowledge God, to be holy and righteous in his dealings with thee, and thine own unworthiness the cause of his denying thee. Thus we often finde the Saints expressing themselves in their prayers: that *Psal. 22.* though typically made of Christ; yet as it was penned by *David*, and as it may concern his person, it may serve for an instance for this, *I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not:* this might have made him jealous of God; but sayes he, *Thou art holy, &c.* and dealest now with

with me in an holy manner, and **Cap. 9.**
 art just in it : *Others have called on*
thee, and have been heard,
 though I now for my unwor-
 thinesse am denied : *But I am*
a worm. It might have put a
 man off, when he should think
 others are heard, but not I, but
 it puts not him off, but humbles
 him, *I am a worm, &c.* And,
Thou art holy.

2. If God fill thy heart : If God
 with an holy contentment in ^{fill the}
 the deniall ; if he speak to thy ^{heart with}
 heart, as he did to *Moses*, when ^{a holy}
 he denied him, *Deut. 3. Let it* ^{content-}
suffice thee ; if as to *S. Paul*, when ^{ment in}
 he was so earnest about remo- ^{the denial.}
 ving that buffering, if thou get-
 test but such an answer as that
 to him, *My grace is sufficient* ; or
 that some such like considerati-
 on is dropt in that stayes thee :
 it was the effect of *David's* seven
 dayes fasting, that he did so
 H 5 contentedly

Cap. 9. contentedly bear the losse of the Childe, which his servants thought would have overwhelmed him, 2 Sam. 12. 19, 20, 21. But a consideration was dropt in which was the fruit of his prayer, *That he should goe to him, not he return hither*, and his minde was comforted thereby, insomuch, as it is said, *verse 24. that he comforted Bathsheba also.*

Thirdly, if
the heart
be thank-
full out of
faith when
denied.

3. If thou canst be thankful to God, out of faith, that God hath cast and ordered all for the best, though he ha h denied thee; and although thou seest no reason, but that the thing prayed for, would have been for the best, yet art thankful upon the denial of it, out of faith resting in Gods judgement in it: as *David*, in all those fore-mentioned places was, *Thou art holy, that inhabitest the praises of Israel;*

Israel; he praises God for all *Cap. 9.*
 this: *David* before he did eate,
 after his seven dayes fasting for
 the childe, arose, *And went first*
into the Temple and worshipped,
2 Sam. 12. 10. and of what kind
 of worship it was, appears by
 his anointing himself and
 changing his rayment, which was
 in token of rejoycing and
 thanksgiving, and it fell out to
 him according to his faith, for
 presently after, *Solomon* was be-
 gotten, *verse 24.*

4. If thou canst pray still and §. 4.
 givest not over, although thou If the heart be not discouraged,
 standest for mercies which thou for continuing still
 missest; if when thou hast mer- to pray for other things.
 cies granted, thou fearest most,
 and when denied lovest most,
 and art not discouraged; thy
 prayers are heard, *Psal. 80. 4.*
 Though God seemed angry
 with their prayers, yet they
 pray and expostulate with him,
 and

Cap. 9. and give not over, for they made that Psalm as a Prayer, *And how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?* So Psalm 44. 17. *Though we are cast among Dragons, yet we have not been false in thy Covenant.* So say thou, I will pray still, though I never have an answer in this life. It moves ingenuous natures to see men take repulses and denials well, which proud persons will not doe: and so it moves God.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

Application: *A reproof of those that pray, but look not after the return of their prayers: The causes of this neglect.*

THe Use of all is, to re-
 prove those, who put up
 prayers, and are earnest in beg-
 ing, but look not after them
 when they have done, no more
 then if they had not prayed:
 who still venture, and have a
 great stock of prayers going,
 but look not after the returns
 that are made, cast not up their
 commings in, and gainings by
 prayers; and when they have
 prayed, sit down discouraged;
 as not making account in ear-
 nest, that ever they shall hear
 of their prayers again, even as
 if they had been but as words
 cast:

Cap, 10 cast away : as beating the ayre ; as bread cast upon the waters, which they think sinks, or is carried away, and they shall find it no more : but herein you despise Gods Ordinance, and erre, not knowing the power of the prayers ; and ye contemn the Lord. But you will say as they in the Prophet said, *Wherein doe we contemn him ?* if you askt a man a question, and when you had done, did turn your back upon him, as so flag Pilate askt in scorn of Christ, *What is truth ?* but would not stay for an answer, did you not contemn him ? as not to answer when a question is asked you, is contempt, so not to regard the answer made, when you have been earnest in begging, is no lesse contempt also : if you had writ letters to a very friend about important businesse, and had

had earnestly solicited him for Cap. 10.
an answer, and he were care-
full in due time to send one, if
you should make account to
hear of him no more, should
you not wrong him in your
thoughts? Or if he did write,
if you should not vouchsafe to
read over his answer, were it
not a contempt of him? So is it
here, when you have been ear-
nest with God for blessings, and
regard not the answer: and be-
cause verily this is a fault a-
mong us, I will therefore en-
deavour to discover to you the
causes and discouragements,
which though they keep you
not from praying, yet from this
earnest expectation, and real,
and true making account to
hear of answers of your pray-
ers; onely my scope is, not to
shew you so much the reasons,
why God denies you many re-
quests,

The causes
of this neg-
lect, are
two sorts.

Cap. 10 **quests,** as why even in your own hearts you are discouraged after you have prayed, as if they would not be answered, although God doth answer them. These discouragements are partly *temptations*, partly *sinfull impediments* wherein we are more faulty.

1. Temptations want of assurance; as
1. That because your persons are not accepted, your prayers are not.

1. Because your assurance that your persons are accepted, is weak, therefore your confidence that your prayers are heard, is weak also: For as God doth first accept the person, and then our prayers: so the belief, that God doth accept our persons, is that which also upholds our hearts in confidence that our prayers shall be granted; this you may finde in 1 John 5. 13, 14, 15. in the 13. v. he sayes, *These things have I written to you, that ye may know you have eternal life:* and
upon

upon that assurance this will follow, ver. 14, 15. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us &c. And if we know he hears us, we know we have the petitions we desired of him. Mark how hee links these three together, as effects and consequences each of other.

1. These things I write unto you, that you may be assured, that life and heaven is yours, as in 12 & 13 verses. And upon that 2 this confidence will follow in your hearts, That God hears you; that is, that you have his eares open to you, and his heart enlarged towards you: and the 3. if you be assured that God heares you; then from this will follow an assurance, that You shall have any thing granted you desire; yea, and hee makes this one of the main and immediate effects of

1002

Cap. 10 of Assurance of justification ; therefore he saies, *This is the confidence* that we have in him ; that is, this effect there is of this confidence, for whereas they might say, what benefit will accrue to us by this assurance ? why this sayes he, which is one of the great and main priviledges of a Christian, even assurance that God will hear him ; and not only so, but grant him all his prayers. For when a man is assured God hath given him his Son, he will then easily be induced to believe and expect, *How shall he not wish him give me all things ? Rom. 8. 32.* If once he looks upon God as a Father, he will then easily conceive that which Christ sayes ; *If Fathers that are evil can give good things to their Children, how much more shall not your Father give his Spirit, and all good*

good things to them that ask them? Cap. 10

and if he gave his Son, when we did not pray to him, how much more shall he not with him give us all things we pray for? If a man comes to sue to any man whose minde he knew not, whether he loved him or not, he would have small hope or expectation of having his suit granted, though he came again and again; but if he be assured he is in favour with him, according to that degree of favour he supposeth himself to stand in with him, he is assured and confident of obtaining his request.

2. Discouragement is the weaknesse of their prayers: though a man thinks his person is accepted, yet alas! sayes he, my prayers are so poor and weak as surely God will never regard them. To remove which, let me first ask thee this question:

2. Of the weaknesse of our prayers: which is answered by 3. things. I.

Cap. o question : Dost thou pray with all thy might? then though *that thy might be weak* in it self, and in thine own apprehension such, yet because it is all the might which thou hast, & which grace hath in thee, it shall be accepted. *For God accepts according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not, 2 Cor. 8. 12.*

2. 2. Thou art to consider that God doth not hear thee for thy prayers sake, though not without them, but *for his Names sake*, and his *Sons sake*, and because thou art his *Childe*, as the Mother when her *Childe* cries, (suppose it to be a weak *Childe*) doth not neglect to hear and relieve it, but tenders it; not because it doth cry more aloud, but because it cries, and pities it the more weaker it is.

3. 3. Again, though the performance in it self be weak, yet considered

sidered as a prayer, it may be Cap. 10
strong, because a weak prayer
may set the strong God a work;
as faith for the act of it, as produ-
ced by us, may be weak, yet be-
cause its object is Christ, there-
fore it justifies: So it is in prayer,
it prevails, not because of the
performance it self, but because
of the name, which it is put up in,
even Christs name; and there-
fore as a weak faith justifies, so a
weak prayer prevails as well as a
stronger; and both for the like
reason in both, for faith attri-
butes all to God, and so doth
prayer; for as faith is meerly a
receiving grace, so prayer a beg-
ging grace. And therefore dost
thou think thy prayers are accep-
ted at all, notwithstanding their
weakness? if that they are ac-
cepted, then they must be accep-
ted as prayers; now if they be
accepted as prayers, then as effe-
ctuell

Cap. 10 **Qual** motives to prevail with God to grant the thing you ask; for if he should not accept them to that end, for which they were ordained, it is as if he accepted them not at all. As therefore when he approves of any mans faith as true and sincere, he approves and accepts of it to that purpose, for which it was ordained, which is to save and justifie, and to this end doth as fully accept the weakest act of faith, as the strongest; so is it with their prayers, which being ordained as a means to obtain mercies from him, if he accepts them at all, it is with relation to the accomplishment of them, which is their end.

4. Men are mistaken in judging of the weakness of their prayers, they judge of the weakness of their prayers by their expressions, and gifts in performing them,

them, or by the stirring and overflow of affections, whereas the strength and vigor of prayer should be estimated from the faith, the sincerity, the obedience, the desires express in it. As it is not the lowdness of a Preachers voice, but the weight and holiness of the matter, and spirit of the Preacher, that moves a wise, and intelligent hearer: so not gifts, but graces in prayers are they that move the Lord. The strength of prayer lies not in words, but in that it is fitted to prevail with God, one prayer is not more strong than another, further than it is so framed as it hath power with God more or less; as of *Jacob* it is said, *he had power with God*, *Hos. 12.* Now prayers move God, not as an Orator moves his hearers, but as a childe moves his father: two words of a childe humbled, and crying

Cap. 10 crying at his fathers feet, will prevail more than penned orations, Ro. 8. It is the meaning of the Spirit, that God looks unto more than the expressions: for the groans there are said to be *unutterable*. Hezekiahs expressions were so rude and broken, that he sayes, *Esay* 38. 14. that he did but *chatier*, (he being then sick) even *as a crane*, yet God heard them.

3 So often failings of answers: answered by four things.

A third discouragement is failings of answers; I have prayed often and long, and I have been seldome or never answered, and therefore I make little account of my prayers, that they are heard: others have the revenues of their prayers comming in, but I doe miss whatsoever almost I stand for: Therefore say they as those, *why have we fasted and thou regardest it not?* *Esay* 58. 3.

To remove this, consider 1.
That

That thou hast the more reason *Cap. 10*
to wait, for thou hast the more
answers to come: for as wicked
men *treasure up wrath*, so do god-
ly men mercy, and especially by
their prayers, and therefore mer-
cies and answers doe often come
thick together, even as afflictions
also doe.

Suppose thou shouldst have
few answers concerning the
things thou seekest for here, ei-
ther in praying for thy self or o-
thers, yet *thy reward is with the*
Lord. It is in praying as in prea-
ching, a man may preach faith-
fully many a year, and yet not
convert a soule, and yet a man is
not to give over waiting, but to
observe after every Sermon what
good is done, and whether God
will give them repentance, as it
is *2 Tim. 2. 25*. And if none be
converted, yet as *Esay 49. 4*. *A*
mans reward is with the Lord, E-
very

Cap. 10 Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour, 1 Cor. 3. 8. and not according to the success of his labour only. So it is in praying, though thou must : gain and again, and nothing succeeds thou prayest for, yet be not discouraged, for thy reward is with the Lord, which will come in one day.

3.

3. **G O D** doth it, not that he hears thee now, but to thy thee : for a man to say as David saies, Ps. 116. 1, 2. God hath heard my prayer, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live, that is nothing so much as to be able to say, Well, I have prayed thus long, and for these many things, and never sped, and yet I will call upon him whilest I live, though I finde no answer in this life. To finde cummings in, in a trade, and yet to hold out raising still, argues not so much faithfulness in

in a mans calling, as when a man Cap. 10
liath losses and castings behinde
hand, and yet to follow it.

4. God usually stayes so long 4.
that we have done expecting,
*Luke 18. 8. The Elect cry day and
night, but God stayes so long, ver.
7. that when he comes he finds
not faith, they have done expect-
ing, have forgot there prayers,
and then he doth things they look- Esay. 64.
ed not for.*

O her discouragements there §. 2.
are, wherein we our selves are A 2 cause
more faulty, and which are our are sinfull
sins, more than our temptati- discour-
tions, which yet weaken the ragements,
expectation of having our prayers which are
answered: as, three.

1. Slothfulness in prayer, when 1. Sloth-
we doe not put to all our might fulness in
in praying, and then no wonder, prayer.
we doe not only not obtain, but
that our own hearts misgive us,
that we look for little success and

Cap. 10. issue of such prayers, *Qui frigide rogat, docet negare*; he that shews himself cold in a suit, teaches him he sues to, to deny him; if we see one seeking to us faintly, and sleightly, we are not then solicitous to deny him, but think he will be easily put off, and not think much; so accordingly when we shall observe so much by our selves, and see our selves slothfull in praying, and praying *as if we prayed not*, no wonder if by reason of that conscioulnesse, we look not after the successe of such prayers, which in the performance we sleighted; when we pray, as if we were willing to be denyed, we knowing that the Scripture sayes, that *the fervent prayer only prevails*, that prayer which is *every way*, that sets all the faculties on work, *James 5. 16.* How should we then expect that God should grant any good thing

to us? For though God sels no- Cap. 10
thing to us for our prayers, but
gives freely, yet he would have
his gifts accepted: now without
large desires, and longings they
would not be accepted: and what
is fervent prayer, but the expres-
sion of such fervent desire? *Ja-
cob wrestled* when he obtained;
Many seek to enter, sayes Christ,
but you must strive. Now when
we know these things, and yet
are slothfull, how can we expect
any answer at all? will not the
consciousness of it quell all our
expectations? and hence it
comes to pass that God proporti-
oning his dealings with us to our
prayers, because we seem to
pray, and yet pray not to pur-
pose, therefore God he some-
times seems like one asleep, and
then sometimes to wake, and
make fair offers to help, and yet
falls as it were asleep again, be-
cause

Cap. 10 Cause we were thus drowie
 in our prayers; those prayers
 that awaken God, must awaken
 us: those prayers that stir God,
 must first stir us to lay hold on God,
 as *Isaiah* speaks: as obedience
 strengthens faith and assurance,
 fervency in praying begets
 confidence of being heard. In all
 other things slothfulness doth
 discourage and weaken expecta-
 tion: doth any man expect that
 riches should come upon him,
 when he doth his business negli-
 gently? for it is the diligent hand
 that maketh rich: doth any man
 expect a crop and a harvest, if he
 takes not pains to plow, and sow
 his corn? no more if you do not
 take pains with your hearts in
 prayer, can you expect an answer,
 or indeed will you.

2. Discour-
 agement:
 Looking at
 prayer as
 a duty, ra-

2. Cause: or sinfull discour-
 agement herein, is looking at
 prayer only as a duty to be per-
 formed,

med, and so performing it as a *Cap.* 10
 task, and not so much out of de- ^{ther than}
 fires stirred up after the things to ^{as a means}
 be obtained, nor out of faith that ^{to obtain}
 we shall obtain them; which is ^{blessings.}
 as if a Physician having a sick ser- ^{A directi-}
 vant, to whom he prescribeth, ^{on.}
 and commandeth to take some
 physick to cure him, and his man
 should take it indeed because it is
 commanded and prescribed by
 his Master, looking at it as an act
 of duty as he obeys him in other
 businesses, but not as looking at
 it as medicine, or means, that
 will have any work upon him to
 cure him, and therefore orders
 himself as if he had taken no such
 thing. Thus doe most in the
 world pray to God, take prayer as
 a *prescription* only, but not as a
means: they come to God daily,
 but as to a *Master* onely in this
 performance, not as a *Father*,
 and thus doing, no wonder if

Cap. 10 they look for little effect of *prayers*: for our expectation never exceeds or reaches further than our end and intention; which we had in any business. If I perform any ordinance but as a duty, then I rest therein, and expect no further: as if a man preacheth for *filthy lucre* only, he performs his duty, and then looks for his hire, but looks not after any other effect of his Sermons: so nor will men doe after their *prayers* for answers to them when they perform them as duties only. Now to help you in this, you are to look to two things in *prayer*. First, to a *command from God*. Secondly, to the *promises of God*: and so to consider it in a double relation; first as a *duty*, in respect to the *command*, secondly as a *means* to obtain or procure blessings at Gods hand in relation to his *promises*: therefore in *prayer*, first

A direction.

2. Things to be looked at in praying; A command, A promise

an act of obedience, secondly an act of faith is to be exercised, *Ask in faith nothing wavering, Jam. 1.* Now the most in the world perform it as an act of obedience only, and so rest in the present performance and acceptation of it, but if a man pray in faith, he will pray with an eye to the promises; and look on prayer as a means for time to come to obtain such or such a mercy at Gods hands; and if so, then he is not satisfied till he hath an answer of his prayers; and till then will wait, as the Church sayes, *She would wait till he did arise and plead her cause.*

A third sinfull discouragement, is returning to sinnes after prayers, when a man hath prayed for some mercy, and riseth full of much confidence that his prayers are heard, and so a while he walks, yet falling in-

3. Discouragement; falling in- to sinnes again after praying.

Cap. 10 to a finne, *that* sinne doth dash all his hopes, undoes his *prayers* (as he thinks) and calls them back again, meets as it were with the answer, which is Gods messenger, and causeth it to return to heaven again. How often when God had even granted a petition, and the Decree was a coming forth, and the grant newly written, and the seal a setting to it, but an act of Treason coming between, Stops it in the seal, and defers it, blots and blurreth all, both prayer and grant when newly written, and leaves a guilt in the mind, which quells our hopes, and then we look no more after our *prayers*; and this especially if when we were a sinning such a thought came in, (as often it doth to restrain us) are you not in dependance upon God for such a mercy, and have prayed for it, and
are

are fair for it, how then dare you Cap. 10
doe this, and sinne against him? when in this case the heart goes on, this blots all the prayer, and discourageth a man; for saith the conscience, Will God hear sinners? (as he said.) And thus farre it is true, that sinning thus between, interrupts and hinders the obtaining our petitions, that answerably as we doe thus dash The answer of it. and betray and undoe our prayers; so in a proportion, we find in the way to our obtaining the thing we prayed for, so many rubbes and difficulties doe arise, for as we lay blocks in Gods way coming towards us to doe us good, so he in ours: therefore often when a businesse goes prosperously on, and we think we shall carry it, comes some accident between the cup and the lip, that casts all behind hand again, because answerably we dealt

Cap. 10 dealt with God. For when we had *prayed*, and were encouraged and in good hopes, then by some *sinne* or other we spoiled all, and bereaved ourselves of our expectation. But yet this you are to consider, that as in the end *praying* useth to overcome *sinne* in Gods Children, so also God in the end overcomes difficulties, and brings the matter to passe: and know it is not *sinnes* past so much that hinder the prayers of Gods people, as the present unfitnesse and indisposition of their hearts for *mercy*.

TIDINGS

TIDINGS

OF

P E A C E,

To be spoken to Consci-
ences distressed.

P S A L. 85. vers. 8.

—God will speak peace unto his
people, and to his Saints, &c.—



THE main thing in-
tended to be in-
fisted upon out
of these words
is dispatht, yet
that I may not
leave so fair and fruitfull a crop
still

still standing upon the ground unreaped, I will goe on more briskly to have in the rest of that Harvest the Text affords.

This *Psalme* (as was said) was penned as a Prophecy of and prayer for the return of Gods people out of the captivity of *Babylon*, and the setting and establishment of that Church and State upon its former Basis, yet so as therein there is a further and more especial aime had to the peace and glory to be brought in by Christ, till when this Prophecy otherwise had but a poor and slender accomplishment, in regard of much outward glory or peace that that Church enjoyed.

And therefore the peace here spoken of and promised for the present, is to be extended larger than to outward prosperity, or an happy issue out of that calamity,

lamity, even to speaking peace to drooping and weather-beaten consciences: and accordingly we find this kind of peace to have been especially promised by the Prophet *Isaiah* to the people at their return out of the Captivity, both in *Isa. 48.* from 20. to the end, & *Isaiah 57.* from the 14. to the end, there being many broken hearts that had wanted the light of Gods countenance long, having been, during the Captivity, banisht from the Ordinances of the Temple, hanging up their harps mourning whose thoughts were as if God had meant to destroy them, as appears *Jer. 29. 11.* who afterwards were refreshed with inward peace, at the restoration of those Ordinances, as well as with outward, as by those places doth appear. Therefore in relation to this kind of peace
only

only I will at this time handle the words.

In the words you have a discovery of Gods proceedings in treating of peace, or proclaiming war with his people and subjects.

Obser. I 1. You see that sometimes God doth not speak peace to his own children. This was their state for the present, when this *Psalm* was penned: *He will speak peace*, therefore at present he did not; yea, it may incline us to think that God at present spake the contrary, for the *Prophet* speaks this by *faith*, as contrary to sense, and present experience he beleeves G O D intends to come again to a treaty of peace, though now he seems to have nothing but anger, and blood, and warre in His looks, and speeches and actions, and to threaten and proclaim war and take up

up Arms; And thus God often deals with his own Children, whether a people or a particular man: so with a nation, *Esa.* 63. 10. *They rebelled, and He fought against them:* so with a particular man: God frowned upon and rated his Child *Ephraim*, *spake bitter things against him*, (it is the phrase used *Fer.* 31. 20) though yet *Ephraim* is my pleasant Child, sayes he: David had not a good word from him a long time, *Psal.* 51. 8. *Make me to hear again of joy and gladnesse*, and *Psal.* 50. 7. *Hear, ôh my people! and I will speak*, but not against them they might hope, because he loves them for his people; *Hear, ôh Israel! and I will testify against thee*, and yet it follows, *I am the Lord thy God.* *Joh* sayes, he did not speak onely against him, but wrote bitter things; he wrote as it were books

books against him, *Job. 13. 26.*
 he writing over in his Conscience the finnes of his youth in letters of blood, and wrath and terrors for them.

Obfer. 2 There must needs be some great reason for this, *they being His people*, which is the second thing that is intimated, and may be observed out of these words, namely, the reason, or moving cause provoking God thus to interpose the face of his people: they had fallen into some gross folly or other; some sinful inordinate dispositions had been indu'ged unto, and nourished in them; which is usually, though not always the cause of this his dealing; this is evident by this, that the conclusion of their peace, when it is made up again hath this clause, as the onely article of reconciliation between them, that *they*
return

return no more to their folly, im-
plying they had formerly run
out into some inordinacy, which
to reduce them from, GOD
had took up arms against them,
and then by taught them wise-
dome to take heed of losing,
and then buying peace at so
dear a rate again. And indeed
all the quarrels, that GOD
hath against a Nation, a particu-
lar place, or person, that be-
longs to him, doe begin there;
*They rebelled, and He fought a-
gainst them, Esa. 63. 8.* For the
iniquity of his covetousnesse I
was wrath, *Isa. 57.*

The reason is, for anger is out *Reason.*
of love as well as hatred, which
therefore he expresth though
with grief, he should be put
to quarrell with those, he hath
set himself to love. And as
wicked men, whome he always
hates, may out of his patience
have

have a truce; so on the contrary, with his own, God may take up a quarrell, yet he loves them and remembers them with everlasting kindnesse.

The uses of both are these.

Use 1. I. As peace with God is dear to you, so to take heed of turning unto folly; Onely take this advertisement, that they are, not meer follies or ignorances that doe interrupt, or break the peace: as it is not simply the outrage of some Pirats that will cause two States at peace to enter into a warre, unlesse that State consent to their act, and maintain them in their rapine. So it is not simply the rising of lusts that *warre in our members against the law of the minde*, that break the peace between God and us, unlesse they be approved of, and consented unto, nourished and maintained with

with some presumption; whilst we maintain, and take up a constant fight against Gods enemies in us, and disavow the outrageous risings of our lusts, the peace may hold, and often doth; for whilst we are not at peace with sinne, God may be at peace with us and our spirits; but so much peace as we give them, so much war God takes up.

The second Use is: Doth God *Use 2.*
take up quarrels against His own? then upon any breach made, goe forth to meet Him: It is Saint Pauls exhortation, not to let the *Sunne* goe down upon thy wrath, but to reconcile thy self ere night, with thy offended brother; but I turn the exhortation, *Let not the Sunne goe down upon Gods wrath* towards thee; but every day make and renew thy peace with, God ere thou sleepest,

sleepest, that as David sayes, *thou
maiest lie down and sleep in peace,*
Psal. 4. 8.

Use 3. The third Use : If the peace
of Gods own people be thus of-
ten interrupted, who yet are the
Sons of peace, Luke 10. what
Ephes 2. 2. *wrath is reserved for the chil-
dren of disobedience, and open Re-
bells : that are children of wrath,
because of disobedience ? There
is no peace to the wicked, sayes my
God, Eccl. 5. 7. God is a preparing
against thee, who ever thou art,
that goest on in sinne, if thou turn
not, Psal. 7. 13. thou art prest
for hell, and art thither bound,
no encounter with the wrath of
the great God, thither where no
truce is to be had, there is no dis-
charge in that warre, as Solomon
saye, Eccles. 8. 8. Think of this
you that sinne, and wilt sinne;
whose peace is not struck up be-
tween God and you who never
yet*

yet so much as entered into any treaty of peace with God, who never apprehended God and your selves at odds.

The third thing to be obser. *Obser. 3*
ved out of the Text is this; *That*
when the Child of God wants peace,
he can have no peace till God speak
it; God must speak peace if ever
his people have it: therefore
sayes he here, *I will hear what*
God will speak: he speaks in op-
position to the voice of man,
and the help of second causes,
and of all means whatever,
which in time of distresse, of
themselves can doe no good.

Reason first: Because God is
the King of all the world, the So- *Reas. 1.*
veraign Lord of all. Now trea-
ties of warre and peace are the
prerogative of Kings, and of
them alone: they may consult
with their subjects about esta-
blishing good Lawes, as they use

to doe, &c, but the proclaiming Warre and Peace, with foraine States, they have ever held in their own hands; and so doth God, who is the King of Kings.

Reas. 2. Secondly, Because God is the Judge of all the world, and the party offended, at whose suit all arrests and controversies doe come; now when a condemned man stands at the bar, let all the standers by say what they will, bid him be of good comfort, and tell him that his cause will goe well, yet till he hear the Judge himself speak as much, he cannot be at rest in his minde: the Judge only can acquit him and absolve him. The King alone speaks pardons; and so doth God peace; all afflictions are his arrests; thou must therefore make thy peace with him, if thou wilt be at peace.

Reas. 3. Thirdly, Peace especially of conscience,

conscience, is a thing must be created, for our hearts themselves are full of nothing but turmoile, as the *raging sea*, which *cannot rest*; I create the fruit of the lips, peace, *Isaiah 57. 19.* men may speak it, but I must create it; A word of power, such as went forth, when light was created, must goe forth from God, or else there is no peace; for otherwise our hearts are as the sea; that rests not.

Fourthly, The wounds of *Reas. 4.* conscience which are in Gods people, are of that nature, that nothing but God alone can cure them; for, the chief thing that wounds them is the losse of Gods favour, not simply his wrath: for it is the glory of God, not self-love only that makes them seek him; therefore nothing gives peace, but the restoring of his favour, and

K

the

the light of his countenance; the same dart that wounded, must heal again; *Isay 57. I smote him, and I will heal him*: And as one that is sick with love, when love is the disease, no phyfick, no perswasion of friends can cure it, nothing but only the love of the party beloved; so when a soul is wounded for the losse of Gods love, one word from him, one good look, one promise from him, that we are his, will quiet the heart, more than all things in the world, and can only give peace. Like to a poor childe, that cryes for its mother; let who will dandle it, and p'ay with it, and use it re- ver so kindly, yet it will not be stilled, till the mother comes; so it is with a poor soul that cryes after God day and night.

Use. 1.

1. Use. In case thou art in distresse, especially of spirit, and want

want of peace of Conscience,
waite upon God, in the use of
means for peace; friends may
come to thee, and say: Why
shouldest thou be troubled?
thou hast no such cause to be
cast down; but all these are mi-
serable comforters, (as Job said)
unlesse GOD speak peace;
David heard by the Prophet
Nathan that his sinne was par-
doned, but yet his soul was not
at quiet, till GOD would se-
cond it immediately by his Spi-
rit; therefore sayes he, when
Nathan had been with him, *Psal.*
51. 8. Make me to hear of joy
and gladnesse. Art thou baited
with Hellish blasphemies cast
into thy soul? God must speak
peace, and rebuke Satan for
thee, and take him off thee; all
thy friends, all the men in the
world cannot doe it; they can
onely say, as the Archangel

said : *The Lord rebuke thee*; and he can as easily doe it, as he did rebuke *Laban*, and forbad him speaking roughly to *Jacob*; the same charge he can give in an instant to *Saran* : therefore wait upon *G O D*, and look up to him.

Use 2.

2. Consider this against the time you come to dye; all your desire is to dye in peace, and, *Oh let thy servant depart in peace!* is the speech and desire of all; But who is it, that must speak peace to you then? God onely. At death you will send for a good Minister, or a good friend, to give you some comfort, (as you call it) but, if *G O D* will not speak it, how can they? if you could call all the Angels out of Heaven, and all the Saints both in Earth, and Heaven; and so could have all that whole Colledge of Physicians about you

you, and they should desire to comfort you; yet if God will not speak it, who is able to do it? *Job. 34. 29. If he hides his face; who can behold him?* None can shew his face as the opposition shewes. False daubers may come to you, and say *Peace, peace*, as they in the Prophet said; but listen what God will speak, he only must, and can doe it; and be sure you make sure of him before you come to die. Would any wise Prince defer the treaty of peace with his enemy, till he come into the field, and when the battel is begun? how foolish then are those, who neglect seeking after God, till the assault of death comes, and the *King of fears* with all his terrours, hath encompassed them round?

4. *Observation* is, that let Gods *Obfer. 4*
people be in never so great distress, yet it is an easie thing for

God to give peace to them; mark the expression used here, It is but *speaking peace*, that is, it is as easie for him to give peace, as it is for you to *speake a word*; it is no more to him: Then, our comfort is, that as he only must doe it; so he easly can doe it, even with a word.

Reas. 1. Reason 1. Because his speaking is creating: if he speaks, he makes things to be, even with a word; as at first, he did but say, *Let there be light, and there was light*; so still, if he but say, *Let there be peace, there is peace*: He made all, and upholds all by the word of his power. As therefore when the storm was at its heigh, and the waves most raging, yet at one word of Christs they were all still: *The sea and the winds obey him*: So when tentations are most fierce, and the doubts of thine own heart most tumultuous and

and raging, a word from him can still them.

Secondly, because the light, *Reas. 2.* which God gives to a mans spirit, when he speaks peace, is a sure and infallible light, and therefore a satisfying light; so as when it comes it must needs give peace; and no objection, no temptation can darken or obscure it, when it shines: *If he give quietness, who can trouble?* sayes he in *Job 34. 29.* No creature is able to separate from his love, or the assurance of it.

1. It is a certain and infallible light, which God gives when he speaks peace; The *annoynting from above*, which enlighteneth a mans eyes, *is truth, and is no lye*, *1 John. 2. 27.* that is, in teaching a man (of which he there speaks it, for he speaks not only what he is in himself, but what he is in teaching us) he doth it so, as a

man is not deluded by it, and therefore it is added, *none else need teach* that man; for did not the spirit, (when he did speak peace) speak so, as that, that man, to whom it is spoken, did not infallibly apprehend it, he should speak in vain; for so the Apostle reasons in case of *unknown tongues*, that if a trumpet give an *uncertain sound*; or a man speaks so, as it shall not be known what he speaks, *he beats the aire*, I Cor. 14. 9. Now therefore surely God, when he speaks peace, speaks it so infallibly, and distinctly, that the soul knows the meaning of it; It is not a voice else; for, sayes the Apostle there, *ver. 10. The end of all voices is to signifie*, and therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, he shall be as a Barbarian, that speaks to me, *ver. 11. especially*, if the speaker undertakes to be a witness,

ness, as the Holy Ghost in speaking peace is, 1 John 5 6. Now to witness, is such a testimony, as is taken for infallible, for the end of it, is to put an end to the controversy, and it ends the strife between man and man; now the Holy Ghost, when he speaks, speaks as a witness, and therefore puts an end to a mans doubts: he speaks infallibly.

And therefore in the second place, it is a satisfying light also; it is such a light, as dispels darkness as answers all objections; & so speaks peace home. As in a question, and controversy in Divinity, or Logick, when some one bottom truth is understood, a man hath a light, which goes through all the Objections, & answers them all: now such a light doth the Spirit give to a poor distressed soul, about the great controversy of his own salvation, &

when he doth speak peace; he gives such a light, as satisfies the minde, as lets him see that in Gods free grace, and in Christs, which doth answer to all, he, or all the devils can say against him, from what wants, or objections are in himself. *He openeth, and no man, nor devil, is able to shut:* and therefore when he doth speak peace, his testimony is taken and believed: *If we receive the witness of men, and rest in it, 1 John 5. 9. the witness of God is greater,* that is, of more power and efficacy to perswade, and satisfy the soul.

Use 1.

1. Use, is an **U**se of comfort to poor souls, that are in distress, and in such distress sometimes, as they think, and say; their cause is desperate, and past recovery, so far are their souls sometimes shot into despair. Consider how rare it is for you to have your condition

condition altered, and changed even in a moment. I tell thee, though (it may be) thou hast been cast down this twenty years, and thy soul is battered, broken, hardened, felled, fixed in serious thoughts of thy ruine, and reprobation, yet one good look, one good word from God, shall in an instant dispell all, after thy conceit and apprehension clean; God can and doth often more with one word, in one moment, than Satan could doe in many years, with all the objections he could muster up. The truth of this, in experience we often finde and observe in our selves and others. Yea, and sometimes when he doth speak peace, he gives such satisfaction to a mans soul in that particular, that he would be content to be as many years more, in his spirituall conflicts, to enjoy but the like light,

light, one half hour. Thus easie is it for God to speak peace. Though thou thinkest thy self never so far off from peace, yet he can speak peace to them, that are as farre off, as well as those who are neer, as himself sayes, *Isaiah 57. 19.* for, sayes he, it is I that speak it. And when he doth it, then all thy doubts and distresses will be forgotten, as the pains of a woman in travail are when a Man-childe is born.

Use 2.

Secondly, Is the Church in any distress? (as the Church here at this time was) he can redeem it out of all with a word. A word spoken to *Cyrus* his heart, did set them in their own land again, so you have it expressed, *Esay 44. 26, 27, 28* *The God that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited, and to the Cities of Judah, Ye shall be built*; you see his manner of doing it, it is but with a word speaking,

speaking, *he sayes to Jerusalem,*
be built; and though there be ne-
 ver so great impediments in the
 way, *he will say to the deep, be dry,*
 that his people may pass over;
 he dried up a whole Nation, a sea
 of people, namely the *Babyloni-*
ans, to make way for his delive-
 rance: and when they are conque-
 red, & *Cyrus,* a new King comes
 to have the sway of things, God
 speaks to his heart also; *That*
saith of Cyrus, He is my shepheard;
 and cauleth him to say to *Jerusa-*
lem, Be thou built. Therefore
 goe to him, and trust in him in all
 the distresses of the Church, as
 the Church also did, *Psal. 44. 4.*
Thou art my King, command deli-
verances: A *Mandamus* from
 God doth it, and will doe it at
 any time.

Let God be never so angry,
 and his peoples distresse never
 so great, *yet he will speak peace in*
the

the end to his people : you heard before, that if we have peace, he only must give it ; and then, that he could, and was able with ease to doe it : and now you shall hear, that he will certainly do it in the end.

The *Reasons* the Text suggests are these.

Reas. 1. 1. If we consider but who this God is, that is to speak peace, *I will hear what God the Lord will speak* ; he is *the Lord*, and therefore able to speak what pleaseth him ; he is peculiarly *the God of peace*, and therefore willing to speak peace. Now, 1. when it is said, he is *the God of peace*, and *the God of comfort*, the meaning is, he is full of it, infinitely full of it, and out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks : thoughts of peace, and love to his, do boil within him, as hatred, or malice doth in a malicious man towards his

his enemy; so as he cannot contain and forbear expressing it towards him; that as *David* sayes, his thoughts did burn within him, and at last, break forth; so in God, I know the thoughts think towards you (sayes he to them of the captivity) *Jer. 29. 11. They are thoughts of peace, and not of evil.* And 2. besides that these his thoughts of peace are taken up of himself, his Son also hath bespoken peace for us; and therefore God will speak it. Even as *Joseph*, though he speak roughly a while to his bretheren, yet could not in the end contain, *Gen. 45. 1. son or God.*

Secondly, Let us consider *Reas. 2.* who they are to whom he is to speak it, they are his people, as the Text hath it; and to them there is no question, but he will speak peace, though he seems angry for a while. They are his people,

people, that is the reason given,
*1 Sam. 12. 22. He will not cast off
 his people :* as also *Esay 63. 8, 9.*
When they rebelled, he was wrath,
yet he said, Surely, they are my peo-
ple, so was I their Saviour. They?
why they are the Sons of peace,
Luke 13. 6. ordained for p. ace,
 and therefore shall be sure to
 have it ; and although some dif-
 ferences may arise betwixt God
 and them, yet there is a naturall
 sympathy in the Lord that moves him
 to speak peace in the end to them:
 as the dumb sonne of *Crasus*,
 when he saw his father like to be
 killed, though he had never
 spake before, yet then out of an
 impetus of spirit, the strings of
 his tongue were unloosed, and he
 cryed out to the murtherer, *Kill*
not King Crasus ; so, when the
 enemies of his Church are ready
 to devour his people, and *Satan*
 is ready to swallow his Child up
 in

in despair, then Gods bowels work within him, and he can hold no longer, but cries, *Save my Child, save my Church. Is Ephraim my pleasant child,* (sayes God) *Jer. 31. 20?* Well sayes God, *though I spake against him,* and took him up and chid him soundly, yet I cannot forget my child sayes he, nor my Fatherly affection to him, but my bowels are stirred, and I will surely have mercy on him.

Thirdly, otherwise if God Reason³ d'd not in the end speak peace, they would indeed return to fol-
lie, which is the third thing in the Text. For this end of speaking peace, is that they might not return to folly, *Psal 125. 3.* *The rod of the wicked shall not alwayes lie upon the righteous, lest they put forth their hand to iniquity* Therefore at the last verse, *Peace shall be upon Israel.* As for this cause
he

he speaks outward peace, so also inward, and suffers not the rod of Satan, and of his own heavie displeasure to lie upon their hearts : for else they would return to the pleasures of sinne ; for every Creature must have some delight, their spirits would fail and be tired out else, and wearied in good duties, if God should not in the end speak peace, *Esay 57. The spirit would faile before me.* When the child swounds in the whipping, God lets fall the rod, and falls a kissing it, to fetch life into it again. As it's a rule in Physick, still to maintain nature : and therefore when that shall be in hazard to be destroyed, they leave giving purging Physick, and give cordials: so doth God with his people ; though with purging physick, he often brings their spirits very weak and low, yet he will

will uphold and maintain their spirits, so as they shall not fail, and be extinguish'd, but then he will give cordials to raise them up again.

Use 3. What good heart that bears a child-like affection to God, would offend such a God, that be thy distresses what they will be, will certainly speak peace, then doe not put him to it, spend not upon that precious stock of his free grace and love. 'Tis true, *he is married to thee,* and therefore *though thou hast gone a whoring after many lovers,* Jer. 3. 1, 2, 14. still he sayes, *Return, for I am married to thee :* as therefore when man and wife are fallen out, they consider, we must live together, and therefore they reconcile themselves again : so consider, it must be between G O D and thee, and make it a means and motive to recover

recover thee, as Samuel did to the Israelites, 1 Sam. 12. 22. *You have committed this great sinne, yet turn not aside from following the Lord, for God will not cast you off, you are his people.* Goe home to him again, he will speak peace. Think thus, the time will come wherein God will be friends again with me, he and I cannot be strange long, though I would he will not, *Esay 57. 18. 19.* though he went on stubbornly, yet God healed him, and would not lose his child, therefore I will return of my self.

THE



THE
FOLLIE
OF
RELAPSING,
after Peace spoken.

PSAL. 85. vers. 8.

—But let them turn no more to folly.



THE sixth Observation is,
That Peace being spoken to
their hearts
by GOD,
they should re-
turn no more to folly. See this
Ezra. 9. 13, 14: Thou having pu-
nished

nisht us lesse than we deserve. and given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy Commandements, wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us?

Reas. 1. 1. Reason : Because it will be a greater aggravation in sinning ; It is made the aggravation of Solomons sinne, 1 Kings ii. 9. That God had appeared to him twice : they were especial appearances and manifestations of mercy ; and though such doe now cease, yet we read of such as are analogicall to them, as John 14. 21. Christ promised to manifest himself, which is by shedding abroad his love, and his Fathers love into the heart, which is evident by the former words, he shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him ; and after he saith, we will come to him, and make our abode with him, ver s.

23. and 27. *My peace I will give unto you.* Now such appearances will be set upon the score of every *sin* many years after, as they were upon *Solomons*. And the reason is, because nothing wounds an ingenuous loving Nature more than matter of unkindnesse : If it had been my enemies, saies David, I could have borne it, *Psal. 55. 12, 14.* but it was thou, oh man! mine acquaintance, we took sweet counsel together, a bo-
lome friend to whom I had committed my secrets, opened my heart : Thus when GOD hath unbosomed himself as it were to a man, and told him what was in his heart towards him, this goes nigh him if he lifts up the heel against him. And the reason of that further also is, because of all things else, a man cannot endure to have his love abused, you come
nigh

nigh him when you doe so, for his love is himself, and commands all in him, so that abuse his love, and you strike at his heart ; it is lesse to abuse any excellency in a man, to reproach and extenuate his parts, learning, &c. though these are dear to him, but his love is his bowels. And therefore, when God hath opened his heart to a man, and set his love upon him, and revealed it to him, and he carries himself unworthily, *it pains him at the heart.* Besides, it is against the law of Nature and of Nations to seek out for a peace, and get it concluded, and then secretly to prepare for, and enter into a warre ; nothing more hatefull, or can exasperate two Nations one against another more than this. It was the aggravation of *Abshloms* sin, that being newly reconciled with his father,

father, and taken into favour again, after two years discountenance, he then began to rebell more closely.

2. Reason is intimated in the *Reas. 2.* the word *folly*, as if the Lord should have said, Set aside the unkindnesse and wrong you doe to me, yet therein you befool your selves; you will have the worst of it. And indeed, when God doth afterwards draw nigh to a man again, upon that his recovery of his peace, it appears to be folly, even in that mans own apprehension; when he hath tasted how sweet God is, then come and ask him, What, will ye return to sinne again? he will then say, Ask me it I will wound or cut my flesh: It is impossible thinks he, I should any more be so besotted; if there were no more motives, he thinks it the greatest folly in the
L world

world. And therefore God on purpose chooseth out that expression, and placeth it here in this cause, because it is indeed the greatest folly in Gods sight; and is so apprehended by our selves, looking upon *sin* after peace is spoken to us. It is folly to *sin* against God at any time, but especially then; and that will appear by these particulars.

1. Because, before a man had that peace, he felt the bitterness of sin, for God never speaks peace, till that be felt : now that is an argument even to sense, never to return to it again ; which a foole will be warned by ; *A burnt Childe dreads the fire* ; even as a Child will take heed being taught by sense. when a man shall be in great distresse, and his Conscience shall suggest to him, as *Jer.*

4. 18. *Thy ways and thy doings have produced these things to thee. this is thy wickednesse :* a speech like that when you say to your Children, when they have gotten any harm, or cold, or sicknesse, this is your playing and gidding, and going in the Snow, and your eating of fruit, &c. so doth God speak there to them when they were in distresse, this is your wickednesse, for it is bitter, it reacheth to the heart, it woundeth the Conscience, the wounding of which, of all else is the greatest misery. When once a man after this, hath peace restored to him, and he comes newly out of such a distresse, aske him then how he likes turning to such a *sin* again, and he will tell you, it is the greatest folly in the world : Aske *David* if he will murther any more after his bones have

been broken, and set again.

2. Thou wilt easily acknowledge it is folly to return to *sin* again, if thou considerest the terms upon which thou didst obtain thy peace. Reckon what pains it cost thee, to wash out the guilt and stain which sinne had made, what vows and resolutions thou madest, what bonds thou didst seal unto, what promises never to return, what prayers and tears, what raps and knocks at Heaven Gates, ere thou couldest get an answer, or God to speak one word, he making as if he had not been within : why is it not folly now to lose that in an instant, thou hast been a getting so long, haply many years, and with so much pains and cost ? You use it as an excuse to prodigals to say, Things lightly come by, are lightly gone ; and yet you count them,

them, and call them fools for it, as not knowing what it is to earn a penny : how much more folly is it, when a man having afore mortgaged his peace, and God restored it again after much suit, and waiting many a term, then to come home, and venture to cast all away at one throw at dice ? such a fool art thou, when thou returnest to sin; to drink that at one draught which thou hast been getting many a year, what madnesse is it ? when thou hast taken much pains to wash thy self, then to wallow in the mire again, and make thy self new work, what folly is it ? who but Children and fools will doe thus ? That which the Church said in another case, may well be alluded to in this, *Cant. 5. 31. I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*

3. Consider, what it is thou

L 3

dost

dost hazard to lose by returning to folly : *thy peace.* David lost it, as appears *Psal. 51. 12.* therefore sayes he, *restore to me the joy of thy salvation ;* In losing of which, thou wilt be so much a loser, that if the sinne thou choolest were able to give thee all thee world, it could not recompence thee ; no not the losse of one hours communion with God, which in a moment will bring thee in more sweetnesse, than all thy sins can doe to eternity. If all the pleasures of sin were contracted, and the quintessence of them strained into one cup, they would not afford so much as one drop of true peace with God doth, being let fall into the heart. *It is peace which passeth understanding.* Few pleasures here doe exceed the senses, nay, the senses are capable of more than the things can give ;
but

but this passeth understanding. *Gods loving kindnesse is better than life.* If it were propounded to thee, thou must lose thy life next moment, if thou shouldest commit such a sinne wouldst thou venture, if thou didst believe it? Now *the loving kindnesse of God is better than life*, and wilt thou lose the injoying of it, though but for a moment.

4. It is folly to return again, because the pleasures of sinne will be much lesse to thee after thou hast had peace spoken. Take them at the best, when they are freshest, and when thy palate was most in relish, and taste with them, when thou wert carnal, and ere thou knewest what sweetnesse was in God, and they then were but poor sorry pleasures: but now, they will prove farre more empty than before; they are

empty vain pleasures even to him that hath them in their flower, and in his season of sinning; and therefore all wicked men are weary, and do inwardly complain of their condition, onely they cannot finde sweetnesse in God, and so are faine to keep themselves to their husks; but alas ! to thee they are farre lesse worth than to another man, who knows not God, and therefore thou art like to have a worse bargain of it; another man can make more money of a sinne, and get more pleasure out of it, then thou art able to doe.

For first, thy conscience having been scorched with sinne, as scalt flesh dears more, and is more sensible in comming to the fire, than other parts of the body, is become of a quicker sense; whereas wicked mens
is

is leared, and so they commit all *uncleannesse with greedinesse*; but thine is tender and galled in the act, which allayes much of the pleasure of thy sinne, and mingleth the more bitternesse with it.

And 2. besides this galling of Conscience, which is common to thee with many an unregenerate man, thou hast a principle of grace, and inner man, which is dead to such pleasures, that tastes them not, that is like *Barzillai*, who through age, 2 *Sam.* 19. 35. could not taste either what he ate or drank, as young men doe, no more can that *New man* in thee: and therefore it can be but half as pleasant to thee as to another man. If one side of a man be taken all with a numb Palsie, what pleasure is it to that man, to exercise his limbs in the acti-

ons of life? He is but halt a man, and lives but half a life; so it is with thee, when thou hast grace in thy heart, but half thy heart can take pleasure in sinning, that new man the other halt, reluctates, grieves for it, hates what thou doest; and all this must needs strike off much of the pleasure.

But 3. If we adde to this, that this new man in him having once tasted what sweetnesse is in God and *How good the Lord is*, is then like a man that hath eaten sweet-meets, other things are out of taste with him, and therefore also it is folly to return. *No man sayes Christ, Luke 5. ult.) having drank old wine, desireth new, for he saith the old is better;* a man used to high fare, cannot agree so well with thin diet: so the soul having been used to taste of great pleasures

tures in God, the impression and remembrance of them leaves his soul lesse satisfied than another mans; a stomach that hath been enlarged to full diet; looks for it, and riseth more hungry from a slender meal: now communion with God enlarges the faculties, and widens them, and makes them more capable of greater joyes than other men have, and therefore the creature is lesse able to fill them; still he remembers with much grief, whilest he is eating his husks, what fare he had in his Fathers house: and oh! *Then it was better with me, than now.* Call me not *Naomi*, but call me *Marah*, as she laid, *for I went out full, and am come home empty*; so doth he say, when he comes from the act of sinning, he went with his heart full of peace, and meeting with

a bargain of sinning, thought to
 eck out his joy, and make it ful-
 ler, but he comes home empty.

1. Use, is to those who have
 had Peace spoken to them, let
 them at such times fear them-
 selves and God most, for then
 comes in this, as you see here,
 as the most seasonable admoni-
 tion that can be given, to return
 no more to folly. 1. Fear God
 then most; for of all times else,
 then sinnes provoke him most;
 to come and call him *Father*,
 and *the gulde of your mouth*, and
 yet to fall to sinne, this is to doe
 as evill as you can, you cannot
 doe worse. *Jer. 3. 4, 5.* So
Ezra. 9. After such an escaping,
 should we again break thy Comman-
 dements, wouldest thou not be an-
 gry till thou hadst consumed us? In
 times of affliction it is the pro-
 perty of a good child to love
 God most: in times of speaking
 peace,

peace, to fear God and his goodnesse, and to fear to offend him for his goodnesse sake. Did I onely say, that God is provoked most then, if you return to folly? Nay, I adde further, he is grieved, which is more then to be provoked; and therefore you shall mark that expression & admonition not to grieve Gods Spirit, then comes in, when the Spirit hath sealed us up to the day of redemption, Ephes. 4. 30. Then by sinning we are said more properly to grieve him than before, when he hath so far engaged himself to love a man, and expressed himself to him, and sets his Seal upon him for his. God is angry with wicked mens sinnes, but he is grieved for yours. To grieve him is more than to anger him. Meer anger is an affection can ease it self by revenge, and by coming

ming even again with the party, and when we can or intend to doe so, our mindes are not so much aggrieved, but please themselves rather to think of the revenge which we mean to execute : so when wicked men sin whom God means to meet with, he is said to be angry rather than grieved; and sayes, *I will ease my self of mine adversaries, Esay 1. 24. and avenge my self of mine enemies.* But here, as when a mans wife that lyes in his bosome, or his childe shall wrong him : so is it when one sinnes, whom God hath set himself to love, and done much for, and made known his everlasting kindnesse unto, and sealed to the day of redemption : this goes to his heart, grieves him rather than angers him, and such are the truest and deepest griefs. What should he doe with

with you in this case? if afflict you, and by that means goe about to turn you from your iniquity, therein he shall but afflict himself as it were, for *Though they rebelled, yet when they were afflicted, he was afflicted, Esay 63. 9, 10.* As when a Father that is a Magistrate, or as one that maintains a Student in a Colledge, if either punisheth a child, or pupil in his purse, he punisheth himself, so must God afflict himself to afflict you. Put not the Lord into these straits if you have any love in you. And 2. as thou art therefore to fear God most then, so thy self most, and to be more watchfull over thy own heart; thou art then apt to return to folly, if thou takest not heed; as when a man hath been very hot, or sweated much, he is apt to take the greatest cold. *Hezekiah*, after

ter God sealed peace to him, and answered his prayers, and renewed the lease of his life, his heart got cold, he did return to folly. The reason is, because then the heart is apt to grow lesse watchfull, and to think it self fortified enough against any tentation. As *S. Peter* having seen *Christ* transfigured in the Mount, grew confident in his own strength. And know that the Devil watcheth such an opportunity most, for he gets a great victory if he can foil thee then, after he hath been foiled himself, and when thou art most triumphing over him; how many battels have been lost through security of victory and recoyling of the enemy: and besides, our corrupt nature, so far as unrenewed, is apt to gather heart to it self, to slight sinne, as thinking
its,

its pardon easily gotten.

Therefore when thou art tempted, labour often to renew those thoughts, which thou hadst of thy sinne at that time, when thou wert suing for peace, before thy peace was gotten; when thou wouldest have given a world for Gods favour; and also what thoughts thou hadst of it, when God spake peace, how thou didst abhorre it, yea, thy self, and look what sin was most bitter to thee and an enemy to thy peace; as if uncleanness, idleness, neglect of prayer, ill company, &c. and preserve in thy heart those bitter apprehensions of it, and say of it, thou hast *been a bloody sinne to me*, as *Moses* wife said of her husband: and though I have got peace, and my life saved, yet it was a bloody sinne to *Christ*, his blood was shed to purchase this my peace, and shall

shall I return to it?

And when tempted to it again, have recourse to the kindness God shewed thee in pardoning, and say, How shall I doe this, & sin against God? say as he said, *Is this thy kindnesse to thy friend?* 2 Sam. 16. 16. and what, shall I *Absolom*-like, now I am new reconciled to my Father, fall a plotting treason again? what shall I make more work for prayer, more work for God, break my bones again, and lie roaring again? Think thus, I was burnt in the hand afore, I shall be racked surely now. *Sinne no more lest a worse thing befall thee.*

Use 3. The doctrine of assurance (if not abused) and of Gods speaking peace to men is no dangerous doctrine to make men secure and presumptuous in sinning: when peace is preached in
any

any mans heart, this use naturally flows from that doctrine, *return no more to folly.* The very scope of the whole Epistle of St. John is to help all beleevers to assurance, as appears by the 1 John 1. 4, 5. and the 5. Chap. 13. *These things I writ to you, that yee might have communion with God, and that your joy might be full.* But this will open a way to all licentiousness. No sayes St. John. Chap. 2. 1. *These things I write unto you that you sin not; nothing guards the heart more against tentations, than the peace of God: it is said to guard the heart, Phil. 4. 2. Yea, and if you doe sinne, the assurance of Gods love is the speediest way to recover you; so it followes: If any one doth sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, &c. And he that hath this hope in him, that is, to live with Christ, and knowes what manner*

manner of love the Father bears us, purifies himself as he is pure, 1 John 3. 1, 2, 3. If there were no more but self-love in a man, it were then no wonder if he doth abuse it : For self-love, where the love of God is wanting, is unthankfull and ungratefull, willing to take all the love and kindness which is afforded, and abuse it, and work upon it for it's own advantage ; and it is true also, that because we have too much of this principle unmortified in us, therefore God trusteth so few with much assurance, because they would abuse it. But where true love to God is seated, and much of it implanted, there the love of God, and the peace of God doth as kindly and naturally enkindle and enflame, and set it a work, even as arguments suitable to self-love doe work upon, and stirre that principle. For
grace

grace is more for God than for our selves, it being the image of Gods holiness, whose holiness consists in this, to aime at himself in all : and therefore when Gods free grace towards a man is revealed, it raiseth him up to higher strains of love to God, and hatred of sinne. And therefore it is observable, *Psal. 51. 12.* that *David* when he prays for the restoring of the joy of his salvation, he prays not simply for it, or alone, but withall prays for a free spirit, *Establish me with thy free spirit* : that is, a spirit of ingenuity, which is kindly, sweetly, and freely wrought upon : therefore when we have a free spirit wrought in us, than that free love that is in God toward us, will work most kindly upon it, and constrains us to love him that loved us first. *The love of Christ constrains us, 2 Cor. 5. 14.* Because

we

we thus judge, that if Christ dyed for all, then they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them : S. Paul gives the reason, why this love of Christ did thus constrain him, because he did thus judge, that is, this consideration of Christs love, he having a principle of love in his heart to Christ, he found to be a powerfull prevailing reason to perswade him to live to Christ. Having a new judgement he saw force and strength in the argument. And so shall we if we thus judge, and it will have this naturall consequence as naturally to follow upon it in our hearts, as any reason in any other kinde hath, that is brought to enforce any other conclusion. And therefore as the minde is constrained (as it were) to assent to a truth proved by force of reason, that if you grant this,

this, then this or that will follow: so because we judge this reasonable by an argument drawn out of *Loves Topicks*, that if Christ dyed for all, who otherwise must themselves have dyed, that then they should live to him, this will constrain us to love him, and live to him: *Amore Dei est extaticus, nec se sinit esse sui Juris.*

THIS Text and admonition here gives a just occasion to consider a little of that so often questioned case of conscience, concerning relapses of Gods children into the same sins and folly again, and whether after peace spoken, Gods people may return again to folly. Some have held, that a man after a second repentance could not fall into the same sinne again; others if he did, it excluded him from mercy

The cause of relapsing into the same sinne after peace spoken, resolved.

mercy for time to come. For the comfort of some poor souls, whose case and temptation this may be, I will speak somewhat though sparingly and with caution.

1. The Scripture no where excludeth those from the state of grace, or barres mercy from those that have relapsed into the same *sin*, especially so long as in regard of the manner of their *sinning*, it be but folly, not wickedness, or wilfull *sinning*; that is, rather proceeding out of error of understanding, and heat, and impetuoufness of foolish affections, than obstinacy and malice in the will, and with *despite of the spirit of grace*, Heb. 10. 29.

Yea: 2. In Scripture we meet with such passages and promises, as may undoubtedly uphold any soul, that hath so fallen after peace received, into the same *sin*,
and

and preserve him from apprehending himself excluded therefore from mercy and the state of grace : As *Hos. 14. 4. I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely* ; unless they had fallen after repenting and former healing, it could not have been called backsliding, and yet this he promises to heal, and withall shewes the ground that moved him to it, his loving them freely : for if in any thing his free love is shewn to any of his children, and drawn out, it is in healing again such a backsliding soul after recovery and peace given. For they falling into the same *sinne*, which hath been repented of and healed, provokes G O D more than a thousand other acts of *sinnes* formerly committed, though of the same kinde. And therein also to shew his free love, that he can pardon even the abuse of love it

M

self

self, he leaves some thus to sinne after his love shed abroad in their hearts. Some he shews his free love unto, in keeping them from sinning, others in pardoning them, and giving them repentance: they are but several wayes of drawing it forth; so that if in any thing, herein his free love is shewn, for if it were not free, it would never endure it self to be abused. And likewise the sure mercies of *David* are then shewn when God *multiplies to pardon*: so *Esay 53. 3.* having mentioned the promise of the *sure mercies of David*, He promises to *multiply to pardon*, as it is in the Original, *vers. 7.* which are thus joyned, both because the sureness of his Covenant is therein shewn, and because we might haply multiply to sinne; and at least it supposeth the possibility of it again. God likewise runs upon such a supposition

fiction in that expression of his, to his own people, *Jer. 3. 1, 2.* They say, *if a man put away his wife, and she becomes another mans, shall not the Land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me,* saith the Lord. He speaksto her, as to one had been his Wife, who though she had not been put away by him, but had put away her self and run away, not once, but often, and that with many lovers, and sometimes in the midst of her whoredomes, had come in and made challenge of his former love, and pleaded his former mercy to her, and yet fallen back again, *vers. 4. 5.* (where he addes,) *Wilt thou not from this time cry, My Father, and thou art the guide of my youth?* that is, I know sayes God, you will come now and cry as heretofore you

have done, and say, Oh thou art my father and my husband! and confidently still claim an interest in me upon my former kindnesse, and yet doe as evil as you can, for you cannot doe worse than thus to abuse my love; yet for all this, at the 12. vers. Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, for I am married to you, vers. 14. That which he doth thus to a Nation, he may doe to a particular man, who is his childe.

Again. 3. There are not altogether examples wanting for this.

Example 1. We finde *Sampson* a godly man (whom yet we would scarce have thought such but that we finde his name in the lists of those worthies, *Heb. 11.*) ensnared with a *Philistine* woman, against the counsel of his parents, *Jud. 14. 3.* who clearly laid

laid open his *sinne* to him, and he was in the event reprov'd for his folly, for his wife deceived him, told his riddle to his enemies, which he in the end perceived, and further to reprove him, in the issue she was given away to another, *vers.* 16, 17, 20. from all which passages of reproof, an holy man that had his eyes in his head, could not but see his error; and yet again a long while after this, twenty years after, *Judg.* 15. 20. (when certainly ere that he had repented of this his *sinne*, for which his parents before, and after, God so clearly did rebuke him) he went to *Gaza*, *Judg.* 16. *vers.* 1. and saw an harlot and went in unto her, and there escaped narrowly with his life at midnight. And *vers.* 4. after that also it came to passe he fell in love with another, as bad as any of the for-

mer, *Delilah*, who was his ruine. But his returning thus to folly cost him dear; for in the end he was taken as a Captive to the *Philistims* his enemies, and that through her falshood; deprived of his strength he had spent upon these women; had his eyes, those betraying lights put out, that had ensnared him; and himself made a fool of, to make his enemies sport. So as no child of God can take any great encouragement thus to return to folly for the future, by his example, though comfort they may have therefrom in case they have returned for the time past.

Example 2.

2. Another example may be that of *Jehoshaphat*, who committed a great sinne, in joyning with *Ahab* that wicked King that sold himself to work wickednesse, 2 *Chron.* 18. 1, 2, 3. and he was fore-

foretold what would be the success of that confederacy and journey, by *Micajah*, before he went with him to battel, and after in the battel it self, where he hardly escaped with his life, and by an extraordinary providence at his prayer was delivered; *vers.* 31, 32. and as if that were not sufficient, God sends another Prophet to him, *Chap. 19. 2.* who with open mouth reproves him and discovers to him his sinne, *Shouldest thou help the mighty, and save them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord:* which message to so good a man doubtles was not in vain, but humbled him for that his sinne, and wrought repentance in him to avert that wrath. And yet after that great and miraculous deliverance of him and his people, *chap. 20.* we finde him relapsing into the

same sinne, vers. 35. After this did Jehoshaphat joyn himself with AhaZiah King of Israel, who did very wickedly, and he joyned himself with him to make Ships to goe to Tarshish: which another Prophet in like manner reproveth, and likewise God himself rebuked by the like ill successe of that league to the former, the ships were broken, vers. 37.

iii. Saint Peter, a man, who seemed by other of his carriage bold enough, was yet three severall times surprised with base feare: once when he tempted Christ not to hazard himself at Jerusalem, where Christ had told him that he was to suffer: *Matth. 16. 21, 22, 23.* Master (sayes he) spare thy self: upon which speech Christ calls him *Satan*, rebuketh him more sharply than at any other time, for which surely there was a more than ordinary

dinary cause. Saint *Peter* thought that if his Master should suffer at *Jerusalem*, that himself, and the rest should not be safe : That speech therefore proceeded from fear, and therefore Christ doth immediatly thereupon call for self-denial, and taking up the Crosse, *vers.* 24. And this was immediatly after peace spoken, *vers.* 16, 17, 18. Christ had never more comfortably given testimony to Saint *Peter*, and his faith than there. Yet again, after this Christ had him up into the Mount, and transfigured himself, to hearten him against that trial to come, which made him so confident ; yet then he denied him, at his arraignment : when again Christ immediatly upon that lookt back upon him with so sweet a look, as broke his heart for this his folly ; and

so he returned again, and it cost him many a teare; and Christ after the Resurrection, owned him again, more than any of the rest, bade them that first met him, *Goe tell Peter*, He mentions him by name, and in special, *goe tell him the first news of it*: and then also he asked him, *Peter, lovest thou me?* and he said, *Lord, thou knowest I love thee*: as if he had said, Though I have played the wretch, yet I love thee: upon this, though he grew more bold, *Acts 4.13. yet Gal 2.11, 12.* we finde him falling into the grudging of the same disease, which cast him into another fit, he *dissembled, fearing them of the Circumcision*: this was a spice of the former sin, though not so grosse, and though the outward acts in these finnes were divers in their occasions, yet they were all acts and buds of

of the same root of bitterneſſe; and may as well be called ſins of the ſame kinde, as the committing differing acts of uncleanneſſe, are reckoned falling into the ſame ſinne.

In the fourth place, if the Scriptures had been utterly ſilent in examples, yet reaſon conſonant to other principles and grounds of Divinity, and of the Scriptures, might perſwade the ſame.

1. If he may after the moſt *Reaſ. 1.* ſerious and thorough repentance fall again, in as grievous a ſinne of another kinde, and return: why not into the ſame again? I confeſſe there is ſome diſparity, which might make him more averſe, and ſet him in ſome more remoteneſſe, from the ſame *ſinne* he hath particularly repented of, than another; which ſhall be conſidered in its place :

place : Yet the difference cannot be supposed such, as should make the one possible, and not the other : all true repentance working the heart to an abominating every *sinne*, as well as any; and therefore if it were true, it was for that particular *sinne*, as *sinne*; and then it would work the like against all, and every *sinne*, according to the measure of the *sinfulness*; and though it may, and doth work a more keen, and special hatred against that particular *sinne* a man hath been most stung with, yet still; this is but so farre, as this aggravation, (*to fall into the same sinne again*) may cause such a relapse, to be more sinful than another *sinne* : and so farre, that upon that ground he is, and may be more set and strengthened against it, then against another *sinne*. But then, if the supposition

tion

tion fall upon another grosse *sinne*, never before committed, the sole and single act of which, other circumstances make as haynous, even as this reiterated act of a *sinne* formerly committed can be, then the one is equally as possible as the other. But however, yet still the difference is but in degrees : namely, in that the heart is elongated a degree, or so, further from that *sinne* formerly committed, than any other : which will not therefore so vary the case, (as *magis & minus* doe not) that it should be made impossible to fall into the one, and not into the other.

2. Reason: If he may fall in- *Reas. 2.*
to some grosse *sinne*, which at first conversion, he d.d above all other humble himself for : and yet, *that same initial repentance* did not put him into such an impossibility

possibility of falling into that sinne again : Why then should a renewed act of repentance of the same, or for some other reiterated sinne, be supposed to have such vertue in it; as to make him shot-free for ever, from the same fiery dart again ?

Again thirdly : Let it be considered, from whence it should be, that a renewed, or indeed any act of true repentance, though never so great, and intense, should have such a transcendent, eternal, and invincible vertue in it, and privilege annexed to it; for how is it, that repentance doth strengthen us against sinne, but by restoring the decayed frame of Grace, to a better constitution and greater degree of strength than before; and by raising it, above a mans lusts, and above that lust, more than all

all other? as in *David*, when he prayed, *Create in me a clean heart*, which, through his *sin* of uncleanness, was in an especial manner defiled with a proneness to that sinne: But yet withall remember, that *that* new frame of heart, and strength gotten by that renewed repentance, and *that* augmentation, and increase of hatred against, and abominating that sin wrought by it, is all but a creature; as grace, and every new degree of grace is: and therefore for preserving us, hath in it self but the power, and force of a created habit, which may be prevailed against, by the sinne that is in us; and can no more, nay much lesse put us into a state of confirmation against any particular sinne, than the grace of the Angels could of it self confirm them in a state against all sin. And as for the impression

impression of that bitterness, which in our repentance for that sinne fallen into, was made upon our hearts; that also can be supposed to have but the like force upon our spirits, *that* the impression of *joy unspeakable and glorious*, hath upon the heart in those heavenly raptures, which believers sometimes injoy; yea and the latter of these will easily be supposed to be of the greater efficacy of the two; and both but creatures: Now those ravishing joyes are not yet such immortal and everlastingly quickening cordials, that put such spirits into a man, as to preserve him from swoonds and faintings of spirit for ever: and though, whilst they abide and are present to the heart, they doe then raise it above all things here below: yet when a man hath been a while off from that Mount,

Mount, and hath conversed a while with things here again below; then that lustre wears away, as the glory that shined in *Moses* face did: and after a while, the sense and present taste of those joyes wears out; and when that is gone, the bare remembrance of them which is left, hath not in their absence, such an infallible, though a great efficacy to preserve his minde in an everlasting disrelishing former delights; but that he may, and often doth fall in love again too too much with them: although indeed whilest the present sense of them did abide upon the heart, it abstracted the minde from all things here below. And hence a man is apt to fall from his first love, *Rev. 2.* and from that high esteem of spiritual things; as the *Galathians, Gal. 4. 15.* Where
is

is the blessednesse you spake of, layes Saint Paul to them? therefore answerably the remembrance of the bitternesse of any sinne felt in our deepest humiliations, is much lesse able to preserve a man, nor is the impression and dint made so lasting, nor the scarres and wounds of conscience continuing for ever so fresh, as everlastingly to preserve and deter us from falling into the same sinne again. For both are but creatures, and at best but arguments drawn from sense, and experience within our selves, and have but an humane created power, which is not alwayes efficacious; especially seeing God hath ordained us to live by faith, more than by sense, for faith is appointed by God to be our more constant keeper, 1 Pet. 1. 5. We are kept through faith unto salvation, and by it more

more surely and more constantly than by impressions of joy, or sorrow, which are made to sense : and yet we are not kept by it of it self, but by *the power of God* ; so then we are kept by *the power of God* as the principal supporter, and guardian, *through faith*, as the instrumental, and by it rather than by sense or any other grace of sorrow or repentance ; because faith carries the heart out of it self wholly into the hands of God *as a faithful Creator*, (who is the strength of Israel, to keep a man from every evil work) as not being able to secure it self against any sinne through the power of any mortification, or strength that any other grace or degree of grace hath built, no not for one moment ; and therefore is as dependant upon God after a fall, and a renewed repentance out of it,

it, yea and more than before he fell, and his own wofull experience hath reason to make him so. The like instance to illustrate the truth of this we may draw from the assurance of faith it self : For even the assurance of faith it self, (which is an act properly belonging to that grace, called therefore *the Assurance of Faith*, Heb. 10. 20.) which doth strengthen us as much against doubting when it is joyned with joy unspeakable and glorious, as repentance can doe against any other *sinne* : and whilest it is upon us in the strength of it, a believer is apt to think himself armed and strengthened, and so establish, as that he shall never question Gods love any more, or the pardon of his *sinnes* : and yet experience shewes it, that the guilt of sinne prevails sometimes

times again, after this, and the same doubts arise, and prevail as much as ever; neither will the remembrance of the former assurance be alwayes of force enough to resist them; for he may come to question that assurance it self also; and so *forget that he was purged from his old sinnes.* And if the guilt of sinne prevail in the Conscience again, against such a renewed and settled act of *faith*, why may not the power of a lust prevail in the members, after a renewed act of repentance?

4. If it be said, that a renewed *Reas. 4.* act of thorough repentance doth keep a man, not by any peculiar vertue in it self alone, but by the power of God concurrent with it: Then I demand to see the promise wherein God hath infallibly obliged and ingaged his power upon such a renewed act of
of

of repentance, to preserve from falling into that sinne of all other for ever; without which no man in faith can affirm it; and without which there is an *it may be*, and a supposition of such a possibility, as sometime it falleth out, and is reduced to existence. GOD indeed hath said, that *if we fall, he will put under his hand to break that fall*, that it shall not ruine us; but not so to keep us in his hands, as we shall be out of danger of falling again. A renewed act of repentance is indeed an ordinance sanctified to preserve a man; yet, but in the same manner that other ordinances are, as Prayer, and the Word preacht, and admonition, &c. with which GOD doth not alwaies so infallibly cooperate, as efficaciously to work alwayes that which they serve to.

5. If there were not such a possibility

possibility, as might and doth sometimes fall out; then every regenerate man, after such a renewed act of repentance, might secure himself against the committing of that grosse act again for ever; but so he can never doe against any particular act of sinne, but that sin against the holy Ghost. *S. Paul* therefore exhorts, when a brother is fallen into a sinne, *to restore such an one with the spirit of meeknesse*; upon this consideration, *considering thy self, least thou also be tempted*; and he laies the exhortation upon those who are most spiritual; *Ye that are spiritual, restore such an one, considering thy self, least thou also be tempted, Gal. 6. 1.* so as he speaks of such, as have their hearts raised up to the best frame, through the most deep, and serious repentance: and now we will suppose one, that

that hath formerly fallen himself into the same sin, which another is fallen into, but not yet restored, but himself is returned by repentance out of it : (for indeed, such a spiritual man, is of all other like to be the meekest bonefetter of a man fallen) and and even such doth *St. Paul* exhort to consider, that themselves may for the time to come, be also or in like manner tempted that is, fall as this man fell ; and therefore *so be tempted* as to fall into the same sin again that he was fallen into. And if any man could be secure from the like fall again, he had been out of the reach of this exhortation to this duty upon that ground mentioned, as not capable of it. But the holy Ghost hath elsewhere, *1 Cor. 10. 13.* told us, that there is *no temptation which is common to man*, but is incident to befall any man, at any

any time ; and therefore *ver. 12.*
exhorts him that standeth, to take
heed lest he fall : indeed that tem-
 ptation which is common to Di-
 vils with men, the sin of final de-
 spair, and against the holy Ghost,
 &c. a regenerate man may
 through the grace of Christ, se-
 cure himself against : but, all
 such *sinnes as are common to man,*
 from these or any of them ; no
 man in any state, can without an
 extraordinary revelation secure
 himself from the commission of.

Onely I adde these Cautions
 concerning this case.

There are two sorts of corrup *Caut. 1.*
 tions. First, most grosse corrup-
 tions, which Saint Peter calls,
τὰς ἀκαθαρτίας τοῦ κόσμου, the defilements
of the world, 2 Pet. 2.20. they be-
 ing the common mire, or keonel,
 wherein the unclean swine of
 this world wallow, and which
 the Apostle calls such works of

N

the

the flesh as are manifest, Gal. 5. 19. even to the light of Nature; such as are adultery, fornication, drunkenness, &c. and by those two expressions doe they distinguish them from a sort of more spirituall and refined lusts. For secondly, there are corruptions more spirituall, as pride, secret love of the world. Now, for those grosse corruptions, which are contrary, even to common honesty, and (to use *Jobes* phrase) *are punished by the Judges, Job. 31. 11.* which profane men wallow in, a godly man hath more strength against them, so as it is not so ordinary for him to be entangled again and again with these; for where but moral principles are, these are abstained from, as we see in the Pharisee, *I am no Adulterer, &c.* therefore, where grace is, much more. And some *sinns* are more opposite to the

the spirit of holinesse, and lesse compatible with grace, as uncleannesse, of which Saint Paul sayes, *God hath not called us unto uncleannesse*, but to holinesse, 1 *Thess.* 4. 7. it is in an especial manner there opposed to holinesse, and such as these are *works of the flesh* which are manifest, even to nature, to civill men : and therefore when they are often fallen into, they do manifest, that the heart is but flesh. And although the limits, how seldom or how often, cannot be set concerning relapses into these, or any sinnes ; yet, in an ordinary course, it may be said, that few *godly* men fall into such sins again and again : God keeps them from such in an ordinary providence, that scandalls should not arise : they being sins which all the world takes notice of. But those other sins of rash anger, and

love of the world and spiritual pride, &c. these being lesse manifest, and sitting more close to our spirits, godly men are more subject unto.

Yet secondly : we must again distinguish :

1. There are the inward lustings to those outward acts : now, though grace weakneth the very lustings within, yet, takes them not wholly away : *The spirit that is in us*, (that is,) in us Saints, says S. James, *lusteth to envy* : and as to envy, so to all other sinns.

And secondly, there are the outward grosse acts of such sinns ; and therein the weaknesse of sin in a regenerate man, and strength of grace shews it self most in preserving from them : for, as *to will is present with me*, saies S. Paul. *to will what is good, yet how to performe it, I am not able*, Rom. 7. 18. So on the contrary, to lust the

the heart may be ready, and lust may soon rise up in rebellion, but when it should come to the act, there is a weaknesse discovered; they come to the birth, and want strength often to bring forth: the contrary lusting and prevailing of grace being then seen and discovering it self: that it fareth with a regenerate man in this cause often, as with a man that is deadly wounded; who riseth up to strike his enemy, and thinks to run him thorow, but sinks down again *medio conatu*, when his sword is at his enemies breasts, through a deficiency of spirits; or as a man in a Palsie or the Gout, who thinks he is able to walk, till he comes to try, and then he finds a weaknesse, which makes him fall back again: Thus even when the whole forces of lusts are mustred up, yet the weapons fall

out of their hands, Humors in a healthfull constitution, may stirre and boak in the stomach, when yet they come not up, nor prevail unto vomiting. In that place afore-named, *Gal. 5.* the Apostle seems not to deny but that in the most regenerate, lustings may arise, for *the flesh* (sayes he) *lusteth against the spirit*, *v. 17.* but yet as for outward acts he tels them, *vers. 16.* *That if they walk in the spirit*, that is, in the prevalency of the spirit, keeping up a holy frame of heart above the flesh, that then *ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh*: for that frame of heart so kept up will hinder the outward fulfilling of the lust; which is never done till flesh and corruption is actually raised above the spirit, and gets more voices to carry it, till the spirit be under hatches and the flesh above, and so steers the
the

the helme : otherwise the lusting of the spirit against the flesh will hinder the outward doing and fulfilling of a lust. For the reason he gives, *vers. 17.* *So as you cannot doe what you would,* implies, that not onely lustings which arise without consent, may be in such a man, but further, much of the will may be wonne to consent to them, to like them ; when yet there is not strength enough to carry it on to the outward act ; *you cannot doe what you would.* And what those works of the flesh are, which are manifest works of the flesh, and which Christians whilest they walk in the spirit fulfill nor, he mentions and reckons up in the following words. And this is the more ordinary frame of a Christians heart ; for *vers. 24.* (sayes he) *they that are Christs have crucified*

the affections and lusts, that is, so farre, as not to fulfill them.

3. He may more easily fall into a grosse *sinne* of another kind, than into the same after special repentance for it, and peace spoken in the pardon of it. Because true repentance especially fortifies the heart against that *sinne* which a man hath most repented him of; and sincerity lies more in watching over that *sinne* than any other: so sayes David, *Psal. 18. I was upright, and kept myself from iniquity, that especial sinne which was eminently his sinne.* A mans arme that hath been broke, will if well set, rather break in some other place, than where it was broke at the first. Hence sometimes it falls out, that that which was a godly mans bosom *sinne* before conversion, continues not to be so after, but another
steps

steps up in the room of it, by reason that he then endeavoureth to wash out that great stain most; and spendeth the most of the Fullers sope to purge himself from it; and so becoms ever after, most watchfull over it; and sets in this his weakest place the strongest garrison, and a watch, to prevent the enemy. And as an act of some presumptuous *sinne*, though it inclines the heart more to all *sinne*, than before, yet especially to commit that kind of *sinne* again, rather than any other: so on the contrary, it is in a sound and solemn repentance, for some especial *sinne*; and in the endeavouring, to mortifie some especial member of the body of *sin*: (to mortifie which, not onely in the bulk and general, but also particularly and apart in the several members of it, the *Holy*

Ghost exhorts Col. 3.5.) though thereby, the whole habit of the body of *sin* is purged and weakened, yet that particular *sin* which we aime especially to have mortified, is through Gods blessing more subdued than any other. We see Idolatry was the *sinne* which the people of Israel relapsed into, again and again; yet when they were once thoroughly humbled by the Captivity for it, they never returned to it of all *sinnes* else, not to this day : so as it may be said as was foretold, haply in another case, *Ezek* 16.43. *Thou shalt not commit this lewdnesse of all thy abominations : Jonah*, though he would haply never runne away from God again after his Gaol-delivery out of the *Whales* belly; yet, immediatly after peace spoken to his heart, he falls into a sinne of another kinde; in-
to

to a passion of extreme anger and peevishnesse, and quarrelling against God. And the reason of this especial tendernesse to fall into the same sinne, is, because the Conscience looks upon a relapse into that sinne, to be more hainous than into any other sinne of another kind; because of that aggravation of it, which thereby would stain and die it: and although a sinne of another kind shews the variety of corruption more, yet, this is more against the power and work of repentance it self, which was particularly exercised about that sinne; and also breaks and dissolveth all bands of a mans vows, covenants, prayers, &c. made against it in particular, and so is made more grievous. And this we may see in *Ezraes* humbling himself for that great sinne of the people

ple

ple in joyning themselves in marriage with the people of the Land, when he did set himself to humble himself for them, together with those *that feared God, chap. 9 4.* What an hideous apprehension of the hainousnesse of that sinne, if they should again fall into it, did that dayes repentance raise his heart up unto? as appears *vers. 14.* *Should we again break thy commandements, and joyn in affinity with them, wouldest thou not destroy us, till thou hadst consumed us, and till there was no escaping?* Into which sinne, yet the people did again fall, after they had repented of it, with a solemn confession and promise of amendment, which is recorded *chap. 10 vers. 11, 12, &c.* yet they returned to it again the second time, as we find in *Malachy*, who lived the last of the Prophets,

phets, and after this prayer of Ezra : For chap. 2. 11. the Prophet sayes, *An abomination is committed in Jerusalem, for Judah hath married the daughter of a strange god :* and then follows the aggravation, *vers. 13. This ye have done again,* that is, the second time, and in that respect are challenged to deal treacherously ; and that also in respect they had repented of it the first time, *covering the Altar with tears, with weeping and crying out,* as Malachy there speaks ; so as God regardeth not your offerings any more. And therefore also Psal. 78. 40. *How oft did they* (saith he, as aggravating their sins) *by murmuring provoke the Lord ?* and Numb. 14. 22. God reckons up, and mentions the times of their sinning, how oft they had thus sinned, as an aggravation of them, *They have tempted me*
these

these ten times.

*Cauti-
on 4.*

4. He may fall into the same sinne again and again, untill he hath recovered himself and his peace fully, by a thorough repentance, but yet seldom after. Lot committed incest two nights together, but the orifice of his lust was not yet stopped by repentance; the wound was not closed, and so bled again afresh; but when it is healed once, and the heart made perfect with God, and divorced from that sin, and entred into communion with God again, then though it may fall out, yet a man more hardly returns. A woman that is gone from her husband may play the whore a long while with him she ran away withall till her husband fetches her again: butto run oft away, after receiving again, is intolerable. That is not so ordinary in Gods child.

5. Though

5. Though we can hardly set 5. *Caut.* limits to say when, or when not, this shall fall out from the degrees of mens repentings : as that if they have such or such a degree of repentance, that they fall no more ; yet we may further consider a difference of their returnings to God, and repentings, and of Gods speaking peace.

I. Of their *Repentings* : Some are more imperfect, and but as it were thawings of the minde a little, by means of a little Sunshine of Gods love : Some are more thorow and deep, that recover a man, and put him into a sound & healthfull estate. As for example, a man in an ague hath well dayes, yet his fits return and it may be they leave him for a moneth or so ; and yet they take him again, as at Spring and Autumn ; which is because all this while his body is not thoroughly recovered

recovered to a state of health: so is it with a mans heart in respect of his lusts, though he may have many well dayes, wherein he may eate his meate, and receive sweetnesse in the Word, and ordinances: yet at times his distempers and aguish fits return, he being aguish still; but in the end, after the peace of God hath more thoroughly established his heart, he attains to some settled constant victory over it; and when it doth not prevail to victory, such aguish fits end usually in consumptions, in which long agues often end: as in Temporaries, in whom, sinne overcoming Gods striving with them, it eates all good beginnings out: but if they belong to God, then usually that aguish distemper is in the end, by a more thorough repentance, so healed, as that they

they attain to more victory, and security against it than any other sinne; that as in those other kind of tentations, it often falls out, that that which a man doubteth of most, he comes in the end to be most assured of, and to doubt no more; so also here, a man becomes most freed from that sin, he was long exercised with, of all other. So also

2. For Gods dealings with his, there is much difference therein to be found: there are some kinds of speaking peace by God, and meltings of the heart of his people, which yet are not of that force as to overcome, but wherein God doth but (as it were) strive with them; which strivings doe ever and anon work their hearts to a repentance, and that true and serious: which yet is not so deep,

Hcb. 2. 1.

deep, and thorow, nor so healing the heart at the bottome, as it should. For God sometimes useth more imperfect kind of strivings, even with his own children, about some particular sinne they are to leave, which doe not so fully, at first prevail, and overcome in them; which God doth, to let them see the running issue of their natures, how grace would runne out of it, (as the Apostle speaks) and overcome grace in them, if he should let it alone: and so, lets out upon his childe after many years some lust, which had been long down, which puts him to it exceedingly, so that he is in hazard to be undone, & is put into fears of it; & yet God visiteth his spirit by fits, and *per intervalla* at times strives with him; and though he falls, yet he puts under his hand,

hand, and gives him well dayes,
and some comfortable visitati-
ons; yet such as are not deep e-
nough to work him fully off
from it. For, as God strives
with wicked men, so he some-
times strives with his own also;
which may seem to be the true
meaning of that speech, *Gen. 6.*
where having mentioned the
sinne of his own children, *vers.*
2. That the Sonnes of God
took to them wives of that
wicked seed of *Cain*, he sayes,
My Spirit shall not alwayes strive
with man, for that [he also] is but
flesh : He means not this, of all
mankinde, for he sayes, *[he*
also] is but flesh : now, with
what other creatures, doth
he joyn them in this com-
parison, but with others of the
sonnes of men? so as the mea-
ning is, I see my Children, that
they also are corrupt, and de-
generate

generate as well as the rest of mankind, and my Spirit hath striven with them. In which striving, God lets them see, how if he did not in the end, shew forth his free love to the full, in the rescuing of them, and healing their back-sliding, they would be undone : so as, in the end, through his grace which is sufficient, they obtain the greatest conquest over that lust of any other ; when the heart is once thorowly awakened, and settled in a thorow peace. And as, those doubts they were most troubled with once, (which though they had at times some light against, yet by fits did still arise) are yet in the end, so overcome, as they arise no more, but they enjoy the greatest freedom from them : So it is often herein. And these *strivings to not over-*
comming,

of
th
ch
e,
d,
e
n,
g,
s,
e
n
t
s
-
y
comming, I relemble to the thawing of the Ice, in a great frost, as when in the day time, the Sunne shines, and in the Sun-shine it thaweth a little : but yet, so as at night, or in the shade it freezeth, when sometimes, the weather also begins to change for a night, and yet falls a freezing again : so here, there is not such a thorow shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, as should make a thorow general thaw, to the purpose as we say; and so, when the heat of that is withdrawn, it freezeth again : but in the end there comes a more thorow and general thaw, and change that carries all away, melts the heart, & so alters the temper and constitution of the weather, (as I may so speake) as it freezeth no more. And such a thawing of his heart had *David*, when
Nathan

Nathan came to him, and not afore; though it may be he had those lesser relentings often before.

But let those that are in such a case, take heed they be not hardened through the deceitfulness of *sinne*: and of all the times that passe over you in your lives, these are the most climacteriall, and critical, and most dangerous: For God will not alwayes strive, but if thou beest his child, if such thawings will not doe it, he will use some great afflictions, in the end to divorce the heart, and thy *sinne*; his love will one way or other overcome thee, and in the end prevail. As when *Israel* went on stubbornly in the way of his heart, (sayes God) *I have seen his wayes and will heal him and guid him, Esa. 57.* and the Lord may so heal thee, as those lusts of all other shall not
in

in that grosse manner, break forth any more. And in those times, when God dealeth thus with him, a man will after say, that in such passages of his life, he had more free love spent on him, than in all his life time, before or after; & when he is freed and healed, he will be more thankfull, and fearfull than ever before, or then otherwise he would have been; and so get ground by his stumblings. If any of you, being now in such a conflict as this in such a vicissitude and chance of war, if yet thou findest a constant fight against thy *sin*; and that those breakings, and meltings of thy heart by God, doe win ground of it; and that the comforts, and hopes, which at times are vouchsafed, doe strengthen, and *establisth thy heart in well doing*: as *2 Thess. 2. ult.* and makes thee more

more fearfull, every time thou risest, then ever; so as to look upon another fit if it should come, (which knowing the deceitfulnesse of the heart, thou fearest) as the fit of some great sicknesse, lest it should return again; esteeming it as the greatest crosse that can befall thee; which thou wouldest buy off with thy blood; & bledest most of all to think that thou hast so unconstant a heart, which as it hath abused Gods love formerly, so thou fearest, will doe so again; if thus thou goe on to fight it out, the love of God will in the end overcome in thee: but if thou findest that those encouragements from God, doe through thy corruption, (which turns Gods grace into wantonnesse) nourish thy lusts, and make thee lesse fearfull against the next time; and thy heart harder

harder and securer, and to sleight *sinne* more, because thou hast been so oft visited from on high, and pardoned : thy case is dangerous, and may prove desperate.

6. Though he may return, yet not presently, *Lu. 5. last, He that hath tasted old wine, doth not straight-way drink, and desire new* : not whilest the love of God, and the taste, and relish of it is fresh in his mouth : when the impression is worn out indeed, and begins to be forgotten, then haply he may return.

To conclude with the use of *use.* this point; If it be folly to run into the same *sin*, though we repent of it afterwards : then, what folly is it in them that utterly fall away ; and after they have been enlightened, and tasted of the good word of God, then fall again to the pleasures of *sin*, and
O never

never repent of them? as many doe, that come, and try a little, what is in Religion, and the wayes of God, and then return again to their vomits, and never return to piety again. *Foolish souls, who hath bewitched you? are ye so foolish, that having begun in the spirit, ye end in the flesh? as Gal. 3. 3. Folly indeed: to spend the harvest of your time in seeking God, and then to leave him, when you are about to take leave of the pleasures of sinne. Alas poor souls! whither will ye gee? doe you ever think to have such a God again? Thou hast the words of eternal life, said the Disciples o Christ: and as Saul said to his servants, to keep them from falling away unto David; Can the sonne of Jesse give you vineyards, and make you Captains of thousands? 1 Sam. 22. 7. So, can the world give you*

you that peace that I can give you, may Christ say to you; yea and heaven besides hereafter? Is the Devil, with all the wages of *sinne* you post after, able to make you amends? You thereby dishonour God in returning to *sinne*, and bring an evil report upon the good land; and discredit your Master in changing your service; but withall you be-fool your selves most: you *return to folly*. For even that which you think to gain the world's good word and opinion by, even that you lose: for, though they make a spoil of you, and triumph in such, *and glory in their flesh a while*: yet they never inwardly think well of such an one; nor truly love him. A backslider, is like lukewarm water, having been once heated, which good men spue out, and evil men regard not; for

to

for what use indeed can be made of it? *Like salt that hath lost it's savour, it is good for nothing but the dunghill.* Like one that hath been married, but lives divorced; she is undone for her marriage ever after. Such is the condition of those that fall away and repent not: You who have but turned unto folly; and are not grown to a despising and despising Gods wayes, *Return oh Shulamite, return.* And you that have peace and communion with God, take heed you doe not lose him, you will never have such a God again.

F I N I S.



[illegible]

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a form of shorthand or a specific dialect. The text is arranged in approximately 15 horizontal lines. The characters are highly stylized and difficult to decipher without a key. The script appears to be a form of shorthand used in the 18th or 19th century. The text is written on aged, slightly discolored paper. The lines of text are closely spaced and fill most of the page area.

[The page contains dense handwritten notes in cursive script, likely representing musical notation or shorthand. The handwriting is very fast and slanted, filling most of the page area.]

B 1001.7 275
c + a f < w l
c 4 + 7 h v h 7 2 =
y 7 2 h 7 7 : 4 4 - 6 9
1.51 h 1 : 4 1 + 1 6 2.4
2.8 h 2 1 0 2 : 8 - 1 9 1
8 2 : 4 2 7 1 3 3 : 4 3 : 9 3 1 2
8 : 6 5 4 1 6 7 1 1 - 2
6 2 4 : 1 1 7 0 2 6 2 4 7
1 2 7 6 - h 2 2 1 2 2 7
0 2 1 6 2 3 1 2 4 : 2 4 2
2 1 1 1 + 2 1 1 1 1 1
2 2 1 4 2 2 4 2 4 2 0
2 1 2 2 1 2 2 4 - 0 4
2 3 4 1 6 = + 1 1 1 1 1
1 1 1 1 2 4 2 4 : 7 0 4
1 4 1 4 0 2 2 4 1 4 2 2
1 4 1 2 2 2 1 : 2 2 2 2 -
1 4 1 2 2 1 1 2 2 - 4
1 4 1 4 1 7 2 2 2 2 0
1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 2
1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 2
1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 2